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Mahabal

Malaya Sundari



MAHABAL MALAYASUNDARI

Some wise person has said —

If someone gives you thorn, give him flower.
You will be rewarded with flowers and he with thorns.

As a rule bad deeds bring a harvest of bad fruits and good deeds with that of good fruits. It is surprising that even after knowing this fact man keeps on creating hurdles for others. Under the influence of evil feelings of animosity, hatred and jealousy he indulges in conspiracies to harm others. But the end result is that the thorns he spreads for others pierce his own heart like a trident and torment him.

Queen Champakmala, the wife of king Viradhaval, was chaste and religious. His other queen Kanakamala was cruel and jealous by nature and was ever plagued by the evil intent of harming others. Malayasundari, the daughter of Champakmala, was also an embodiment of virtues like chastity, religiosity and tolerance.

Mahabal Kumar, the son of king Soorpal, was a religious, noble, generous and brave young man. Kanakamala, the step-mother of Malayasundari made all efforts to create hurdles in the life of Mahabal and Malaya. Her intent was to cause them pain at every step. But noble and religious Mahabal-Malaya turned all these thorns into flowers. They faced every storm in life with courage and wisdom. They displayed their generosity by forgiving all misdeeds of the stepmother. One did not stop from being mean and the other displayed greatness through generosity. In the end the goodness and religiosity of Mahabal and Malayasundari won.

Shraman Sanmati Muni ji 'Sahil' has scripted this picture story on the basis of the famous and interesting mythological tale in simple and easy language. Muni ji is a poet, a captivating orator and a radical thinker. He is the disciple of Shri Vinaya Muni ji M., the disciple of scholarly Yuvacharya Shri Madhukar Muni ji M. Sa.

—Srichand Surana 'Saras'

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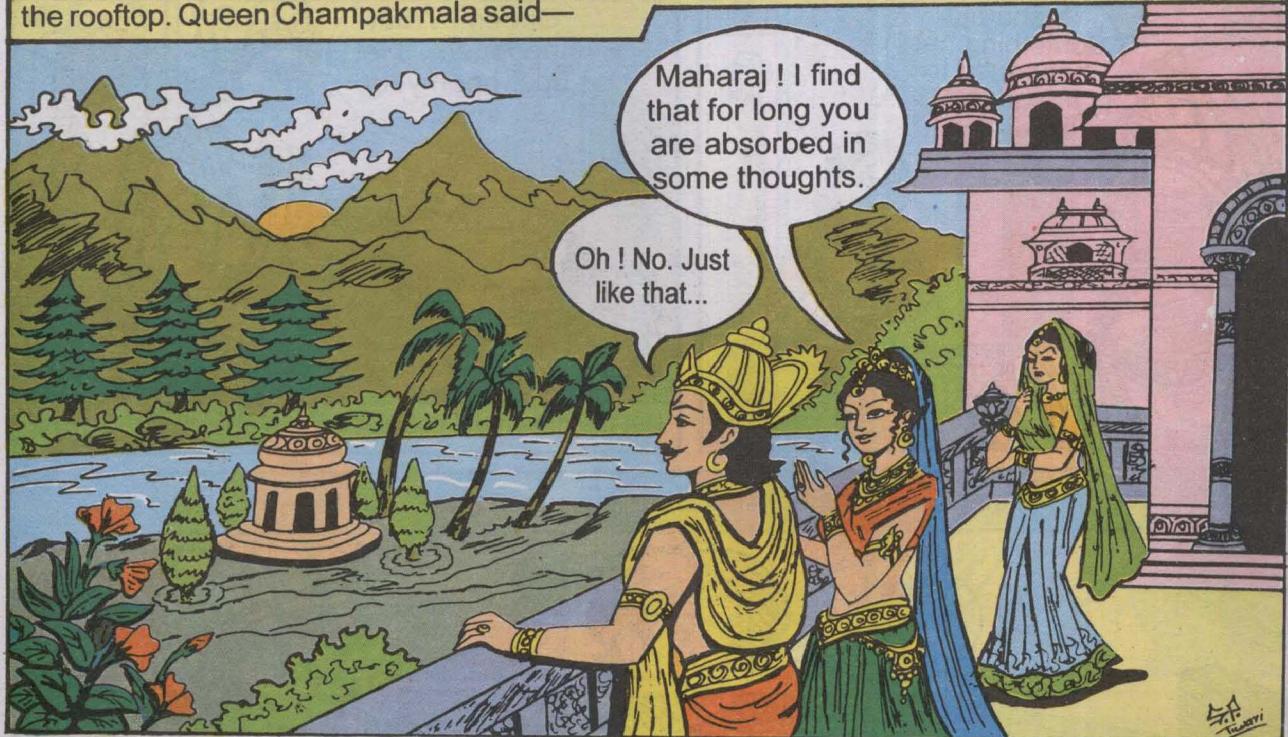
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MAHABAL MALAYASUNDARI

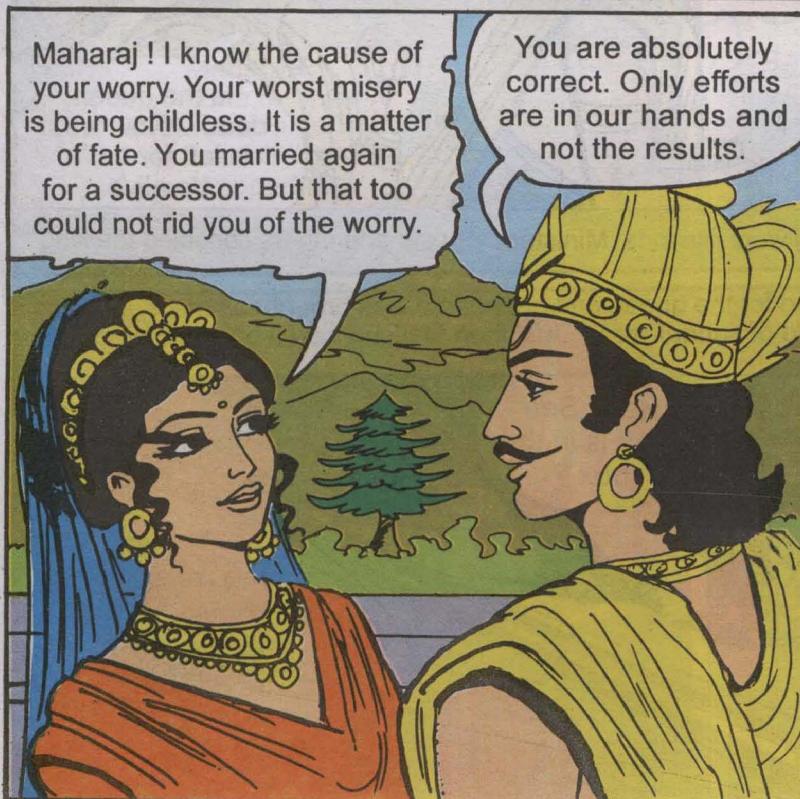
King Viradhaval of Chandravati city had two queens—Champakmala and Kanakamala. One evening the king was lost in his thoughts on the rooftop. Queen Champakmala said—



Maharaj ! I know the cause of your worry. Your worst misery is being childless. It is a matter of fate. You married again for a successor. But that too could not rid you of the worry.

You are absolutely correct. Only efforts are in our hands and not the results.

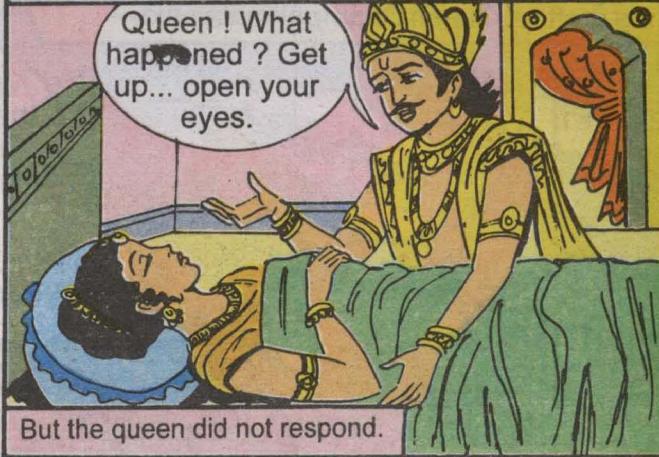
Maharaj ! When the results are not in our hands, why worry ? Have devotion for the Jina and worship him. Chant Namokar Mantra and our worries will be over.



Next morning when the king was getting ready for his court, a maid came running—



The king at once went to the queen's chamber. Champakmala was lying unconscious. The king shook her—



In the mean time the state doctor came. After checking queen's pulse he waved and said sadly—



By evening a funeral pyre was arranged for the queen and her hearse was brought on the river-bank. The body was placed on the pyre made of sandal-wood. Just then the king saw a box floating on the river. He said—



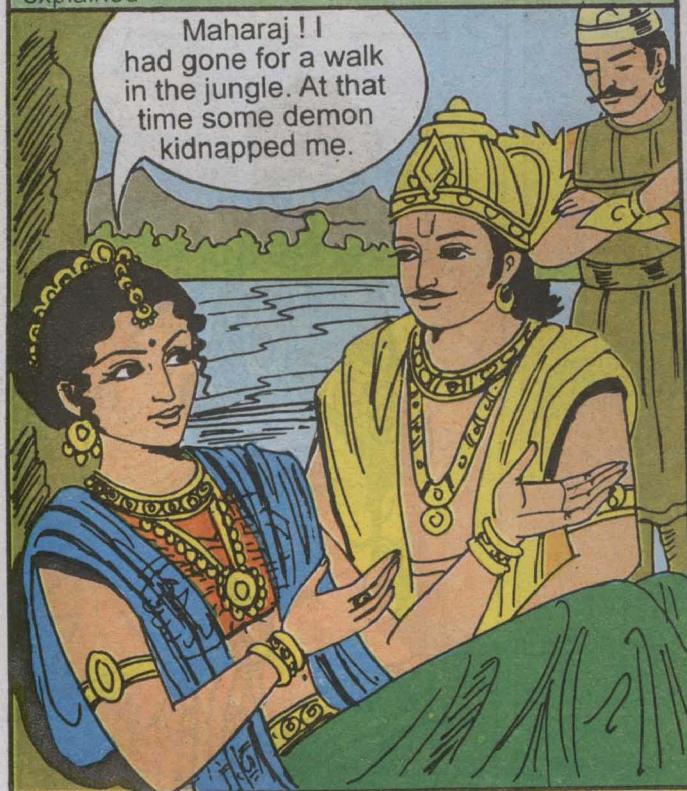
Servants took the box out from the river and opened it. Everyone was taken aback.



By that time smoke was going up from the pyre and the body had disappeared.



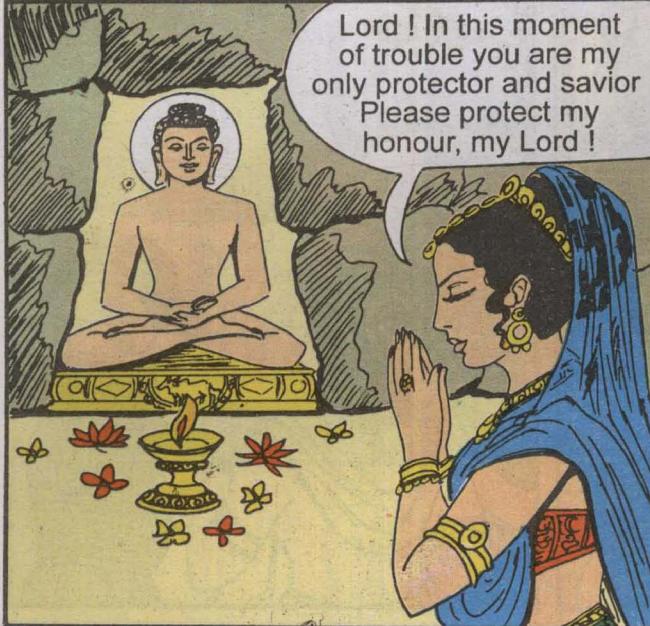
After some time the queen regained consciousness. She got up from the box and sat under a tree. She explained—



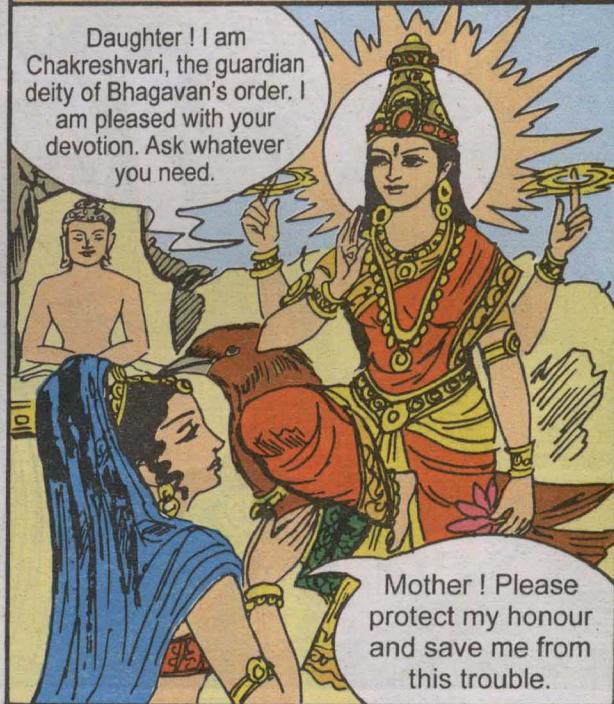
He brought me into a large cave and said—



Queen Champakmala walked around alone in the cave. There she saw a crystal idol of Bhagavan Risabhadeva. She sat down before the image and began worship—



After she worshiped for almost three hours, a divine figure appeared before the queen—



Soon the time will come when you will give birth to a son and a daughter.



Mother ! How will I get free of the clutches of this demon ?

The demon is terrified of me. Now he will not come here. Here, I give you this miraculous Lakshmpunj necklace. Keep it safe with you.



Then the goddess made the queen lie down in a wooden box.

When I opened my eyes I was here.



By the grace of the goddess you have returned safe.

The royal couple and other people happily returned to the city.

About one year later the queen gave birth to a beautiful son, Malyaketu. After that she also gave birth to a daughter. In the birth celebrations the queen said—

We will call her Malaya sundari.



Great ! Malyaketu's sister Malaya sundari !

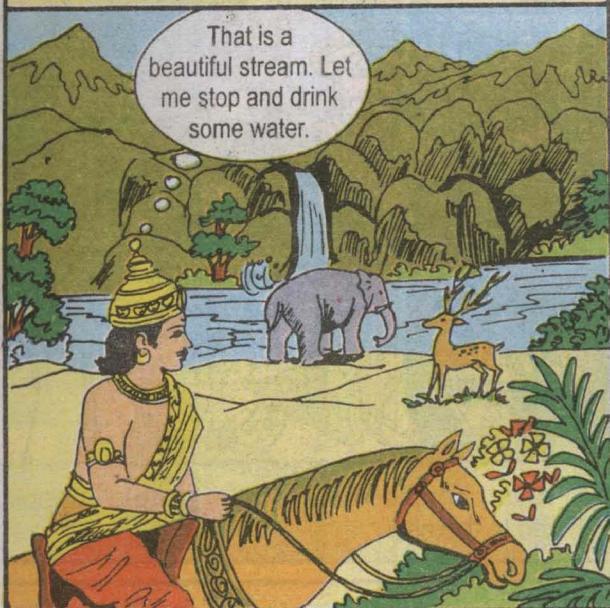
Queen Champakmala became king's favourite and Kanakamala got neglected. This sparked the fire of jealousy in Kanakamala's mind.

For sometime the king is neglecting me. He only listens to whatever Champakmala says and spends all the time with her.

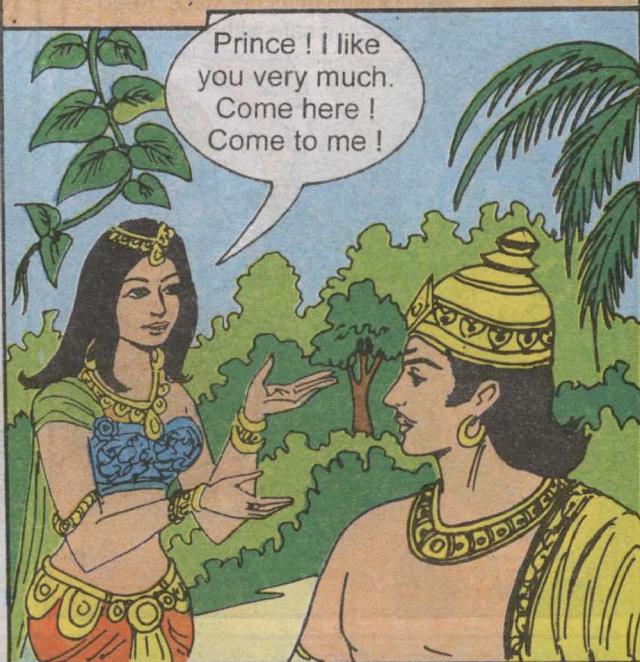


TWENTY YEARS LATER

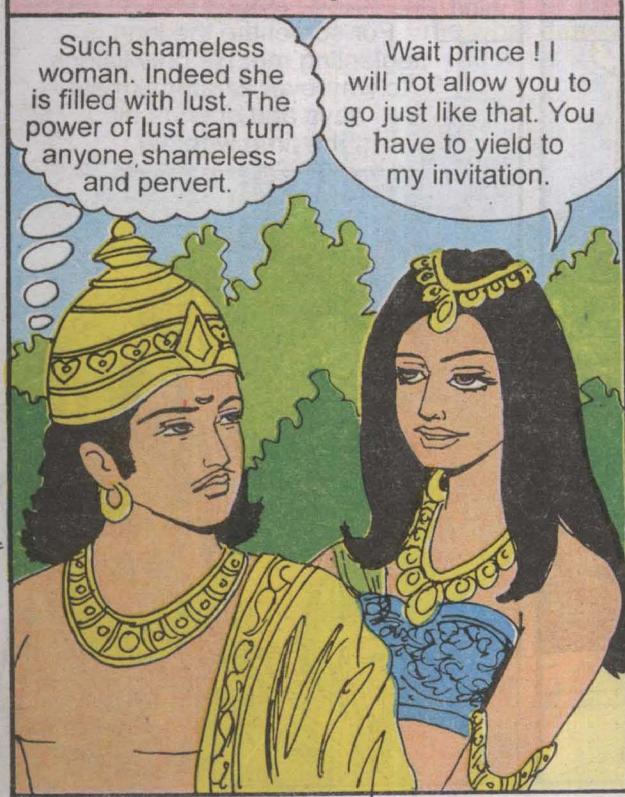
King Soorpal of Pratishthanpur was a close friend of Viradhwala. He had a son named Mahabal. Once while roaming around in a jungle, prince Mahabal became thirsty.



He drank that cold and sweet water. Just then he saw that a divine beauty is standing before him and smiling. The lady approached him and said—

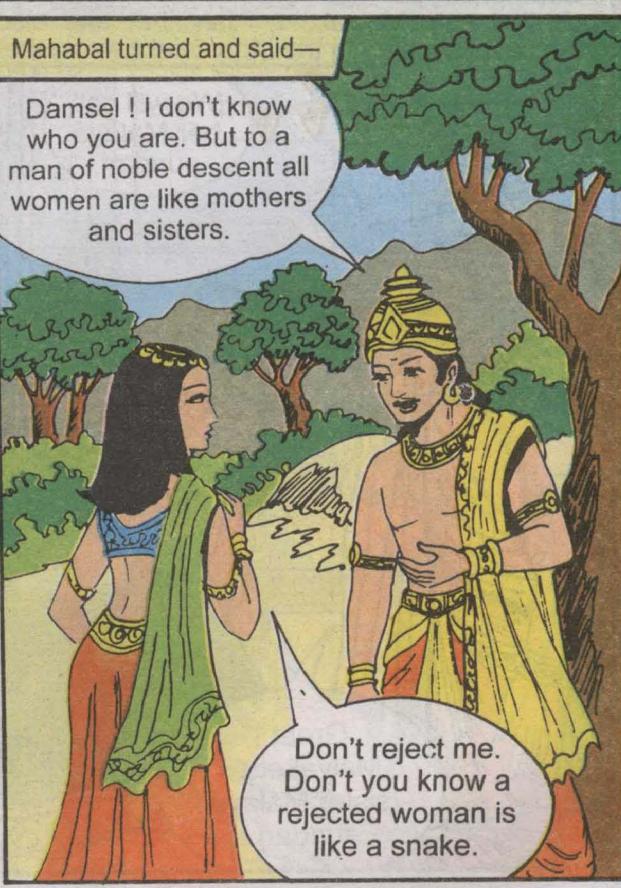


Mahabal looked at the lady and ignoring her, turned to leave. When she called again the prince thought—

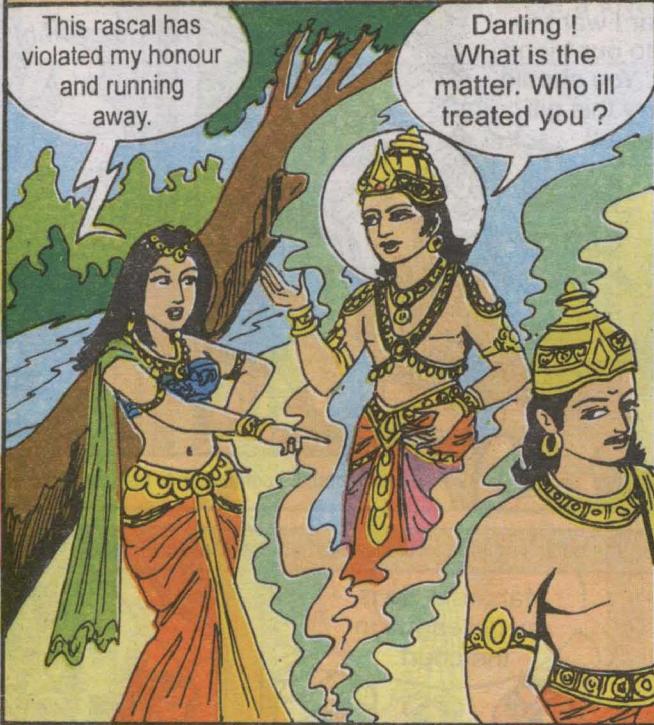


Mahabal turned and said—

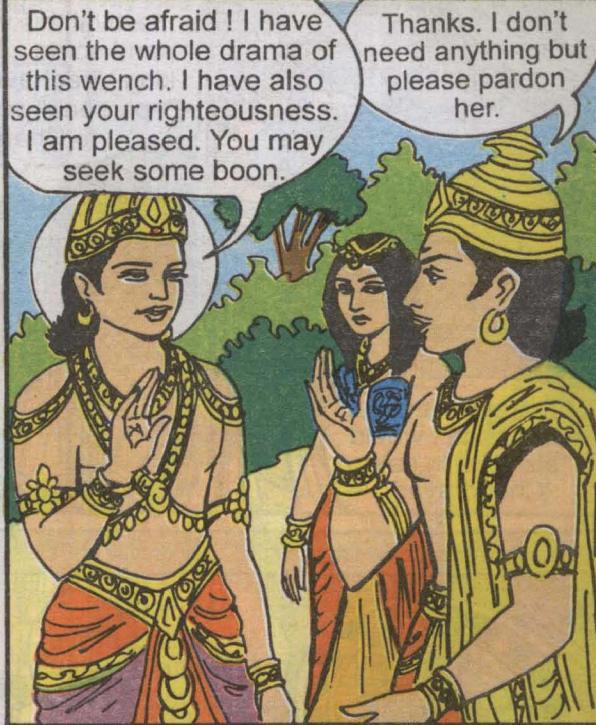
Damsel ! I don't know who you are. But to a man of noble descent all women are like mothers and sisters.



Mahabal silently turned away and moved. The lady shouted for help and a deity appeared—

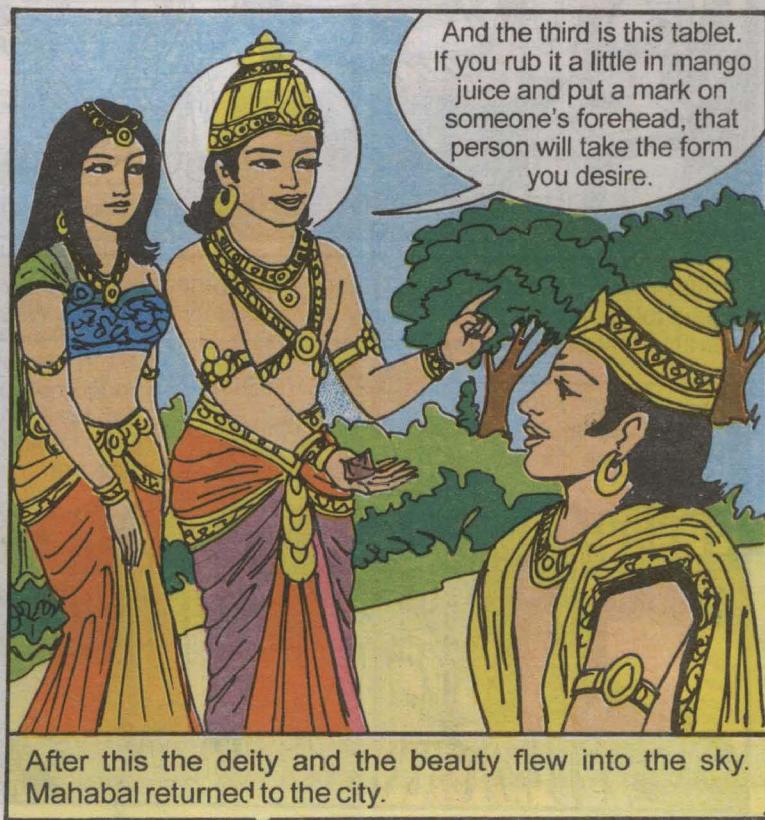


The beauty pointed at the prince. The deity came near the prince and said smiling—



The deity said—

Beholding a divine figure is never without a boon. I will grant you three boons. The first will give you power to acquire any form you like. The second will give you power to mesmerize and control your enemies.



PRATISHTHANPUR COURT

One day king Soorpal said to his prime minister—

On the Ashtanhika festival this year I want to send some gift to our friend king Viradhaval. You should personally carry this gift to Chandravati.

Maharaj ! With your permission I would also like to see Chandravati.

The king granted permission to Mahabal as well.

The prince and the minister came to Chandravati and presented the gifts. The king looked at Mahabal and asked—

Minister ! Who is this brave young man with you ?

Maharaj ! He is my colleague in the court.

In the evening prince Mahabal went around the city on his own. Standing in the balcony of the palace, a beautiful young woman was enjoying the beauty of the city. When the prince looked up at the palace he was attracted by the princess

What an astounding beauty. Is she some divine damsel ?

Oh ! How handsome young man he is. Why can't I shift my gaze from him ?

The two looked at each other and the lost strings of love from earlier births vibrated once again. For a long time they stared at each other. The current of love continued to charge the two. Princess Malaya wrote a love letter and dropped it down.



Mahabal caught the note and moved to a lonely spot to read.

My love ! Flowers of love are blooming in my heart since the moment I saw you. Please accept my call of love and meet me during the night.



After reading the letter Mahabal thought—

For the first time in life I have been attracted to a woman. And she also likes me.

The thoughts took a turn—

Could this love-trap create some problem ?

No ! My heart says this love is pure. Everything will be alright.



Following the instructions in the letter the prince stealthily arrived in the bed chamber of the princess at midnight.

The princes was waiting. She greeted the visitor—



The princes expressed her love—

I have submitted my soul and body to you. Please marry me in the presence of gods and take me with you. By placing this Lakshmpunj necklace on your neck I formally accept you as my husband.



Kanakamala thought—

Oh God ! The princess is getting married stealthily. This is the opportunity to take revenge from my co-wife and her daughter.



She at once went to the king and woke him up.

Maharaj ! Please get up at once ! There is a man in Malaya's room.



The king rushed and knocked at the door.

Princess ! Open the door. Who is in your room ?

O God ! Voice of the king ! What will happen now ?

Don't be afraid. Everything will be alright.



Using the special power given by the deity, Mahabal transformed himself into queen Champakmala.



Malaya opened the door. The king entered with Kanakamala. Mahabal in the form of Champakmala got up and greeted the king—

Maharaj ! You ! Here at midnight ? What is the matter ?

Queen ! I would like to ask the same question to you.



Maharaj ! I was sleepless and so I came here to chat with Malaya.

All right queen ! Continue your chatting. I will go to bed.



On coming out, the king's anger bursted on Kanakamala—

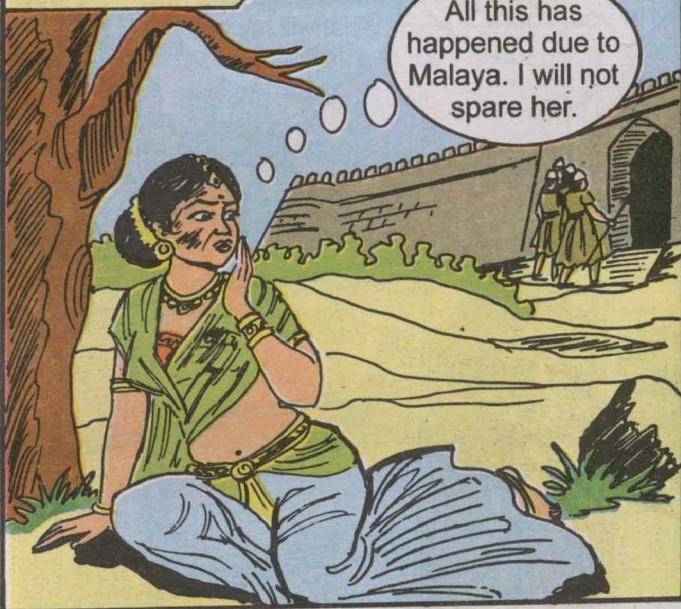
You never
stop acting mean.
Now you will bear
the fruits of your
evil deed.



Burning with anger, the king returned to his chamber.

In the morning he called his guards and ordered them to exile the queen. The guards blackened the queen's face and left her beyond the state limits.

All this has
happened due to
Malaya. I will not
spare her.



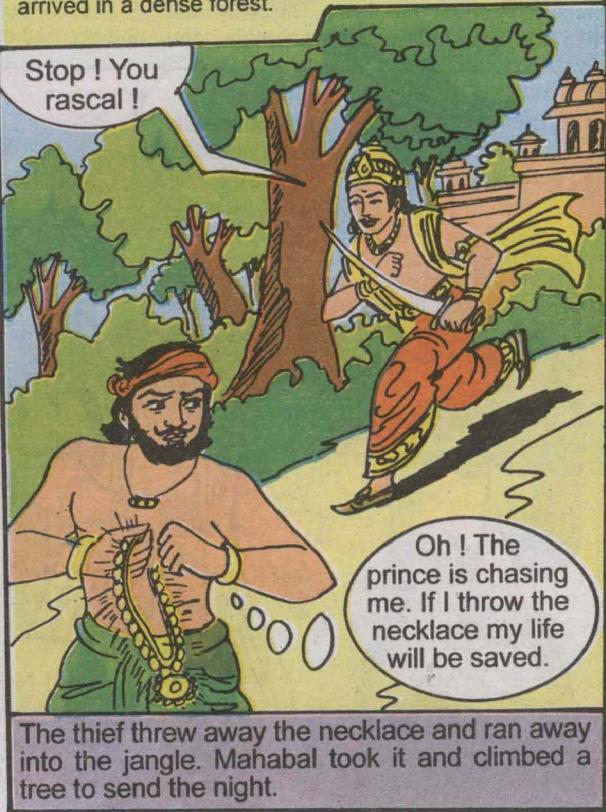
After a few days Mahabal and the minister returned to their capital. One night suddenly the Lakshmpuni necklace disappeared from Mahabal's room.

Oh ! It was lying here just now. Who has lifted it. Some thief must have entered.



When Mahabal came out of the palace he saw the thief running away with the necklace. Chasing him, Mahabal arrived in a dense forest.

Stop ! You rascal !



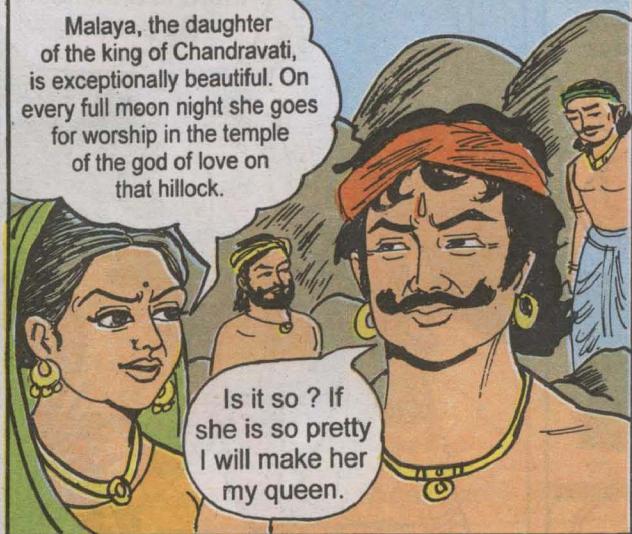
Oh ! The
prince is chasing
me. If I throw the
necklace my life
will be saved.

The thief threw away the necklace and ran away into the jangle. Mahabal took it and climbed a tree to send the night.

Wandering in the jungle, Queen Kanakamala met the chief of a gang of thieves and joined him. One day she thought of taking revenge from Malaya. She provoked the chief—

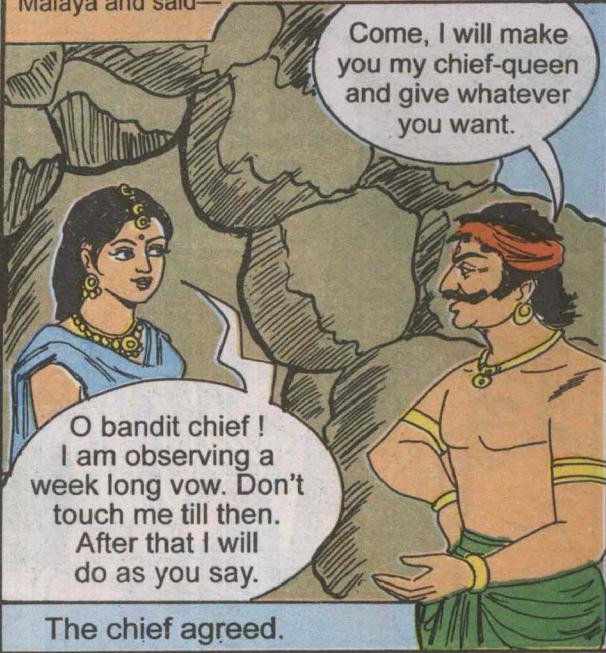
Malaya, the daughter of the king of Chandravati, is exceptionally beautiful. On every full moon night she goes for worship in the temple of the god of love on that hillock.

Is it so ? If she is so pretty I will make her my queen.



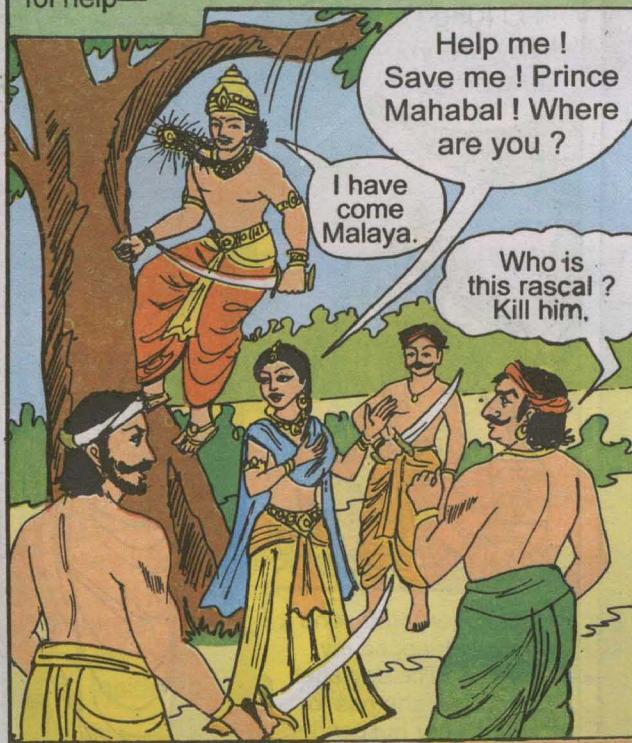
Finding an opportunity the chief of thieves kidnapped Malaya and said—

Come, I will make you my chief-queen and give whatever you want.



The chief agreed.

Finding an opportunity, one night Malaya escaped into the jungle. Some members of the gang followed and caught her. Malaya shouted for help—

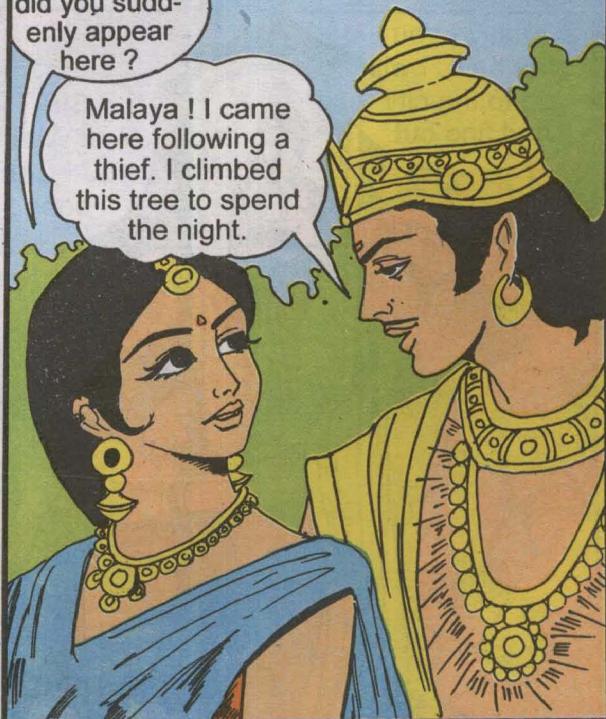


Mahabal jumped down from the tree and attacked the bandits.

Mahabal fought the bandits and soon they ran away.

Prince ! How did you suddenly appear here ?

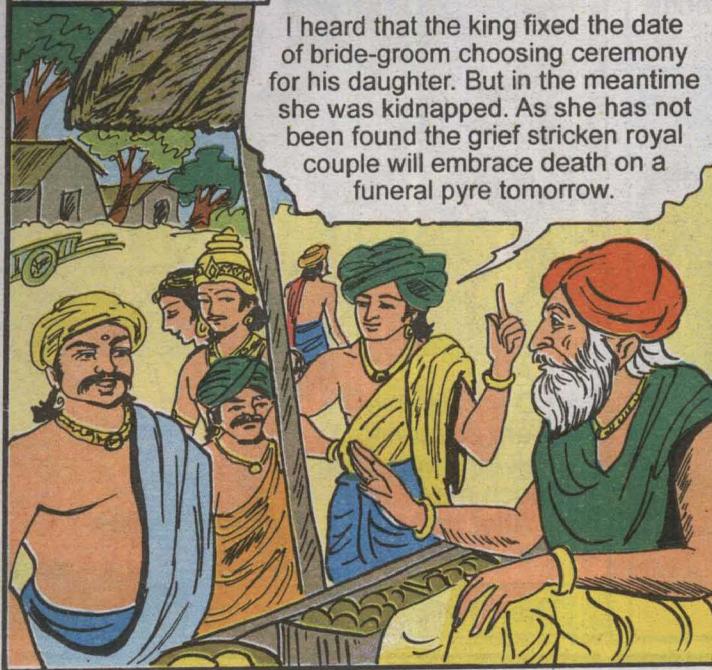
Malaya ! I came here following a thief. I climbed this tree to spend the night.



Then Mahabal told the story of the theft of the necklace. He escorted Malaya back to the city.

Wandering in the jungle Mahabal and Malaya came to a village near Chandravati city and heard people talking—

I heard that the king fixed the date of bride-groom choosing ceremony for his daughter. But in the meantime she was kidnapped. As she has not been found the grief stricken royal couple will embrace death on a funeral pyre tomorrow.



When the two heard all this they became worried.

Sire ! What will happen now ? Think of some way out.

Don't worry. For every problem there is a solution. Be patient.



Outside the village there was an old temple. Mahabal hid Malaya in a room there.

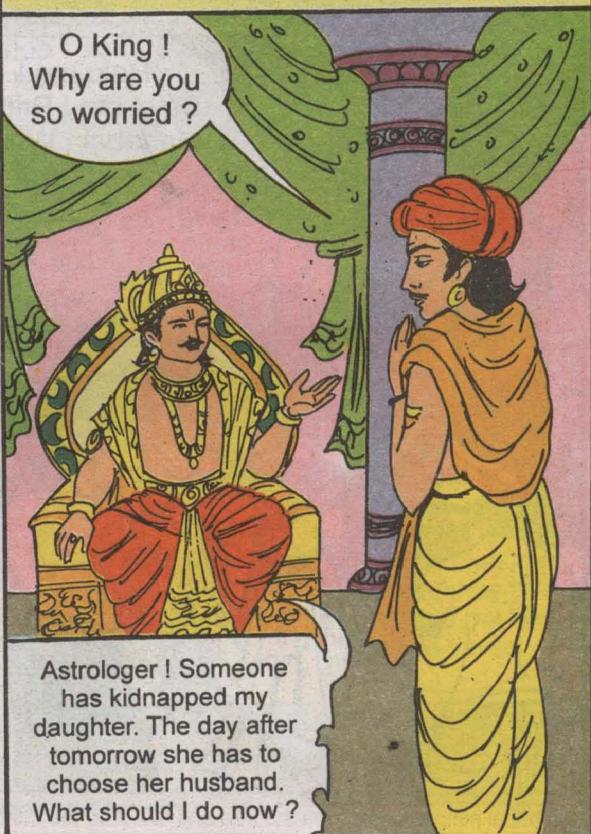
Malay ! You stay here. I will go to the city and find out.



Sire ! I will Wait for you ! Come soon.

Mahabal went to the court disguised as an astrologer. Finding the king worried he asked—

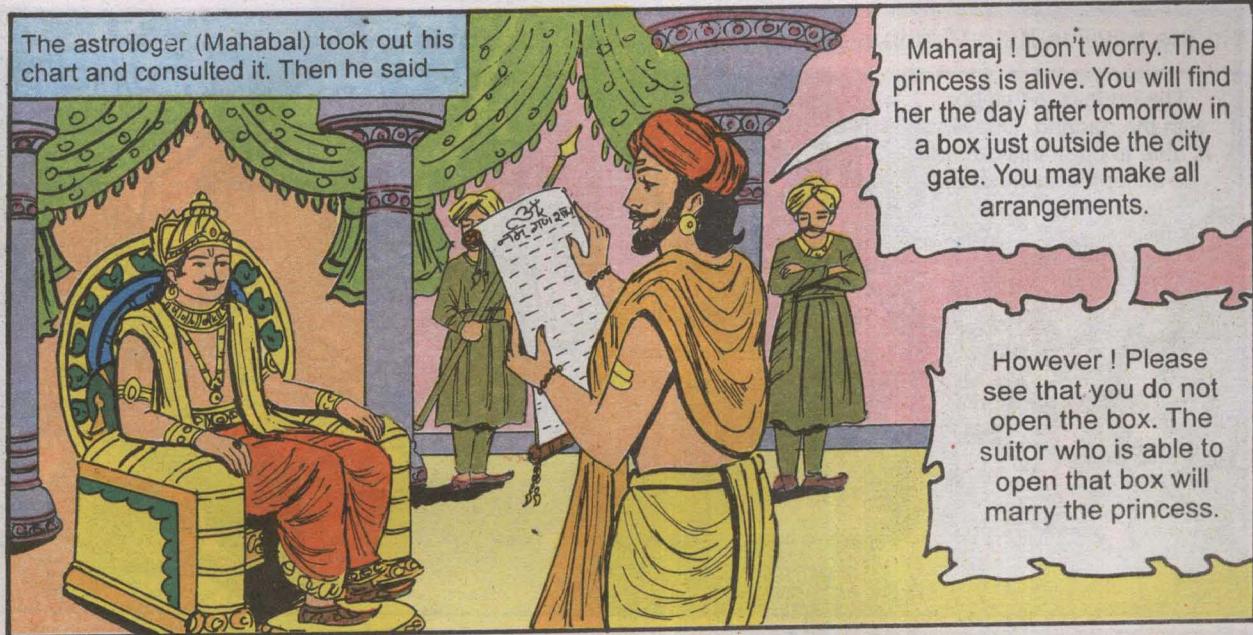
O King ! Why are you so worried ?



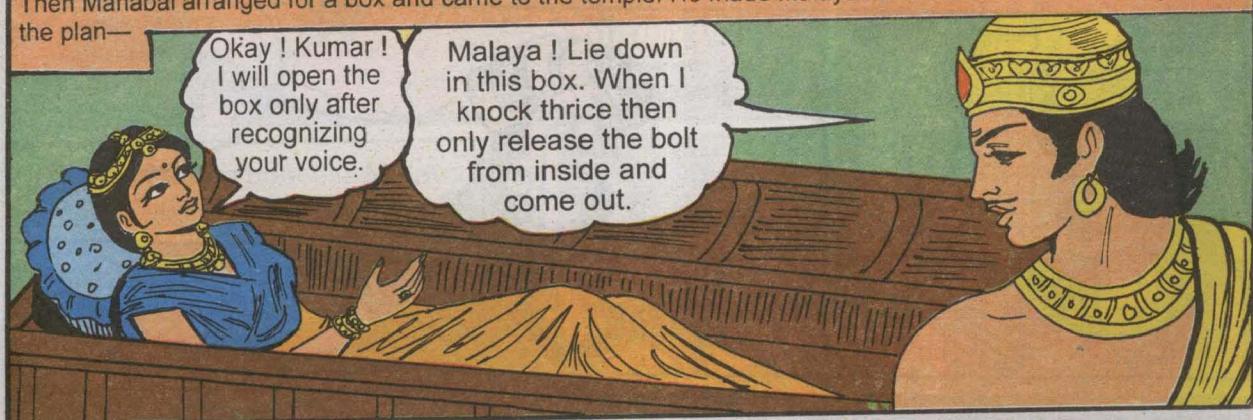
Astrologer ! Someone has kidnapped my daughter. The day after tomorrow she has to choose her husband. What should I do now ?

Mahabal left for the city.

The astrologer (Mahabal) took out his chart and consulted it. Then he said—



Then Mahabal arranged for a box and came to the temple. He made Malaya lie down in the box and explained the plan—



During the night Mahabal stealthily placed the box near the city gate. In the morning when the king sent his guards they saw the box.



In the pavilion King Viradhaval said to the assembled princes—

The bride is in this box with the garland. One who is able to open this box will be accepted as husband by the princess.

Great ! This is a strange way of selection.

Let me be the first to try.



One after another all the princes tried to open the box in vain. With disappointment they commented—

Hey ! Why can't we open this box ?

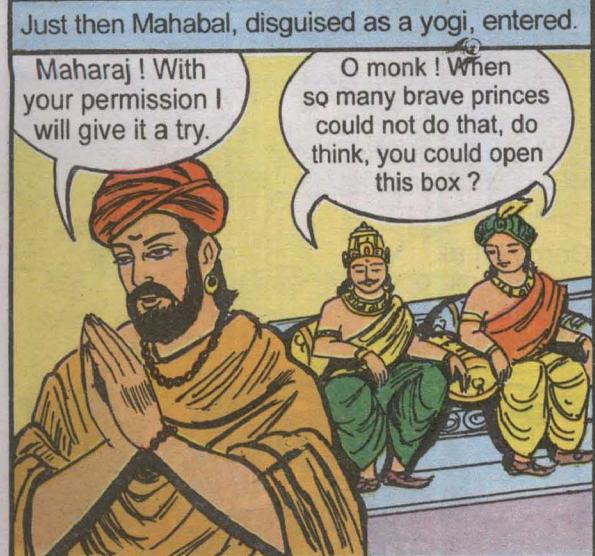
The king has put a strange condition. No one could open this box.



Just then Mahabal, disguised as a yogi, entered.

Maharaj ! With your permission I will give it a try.

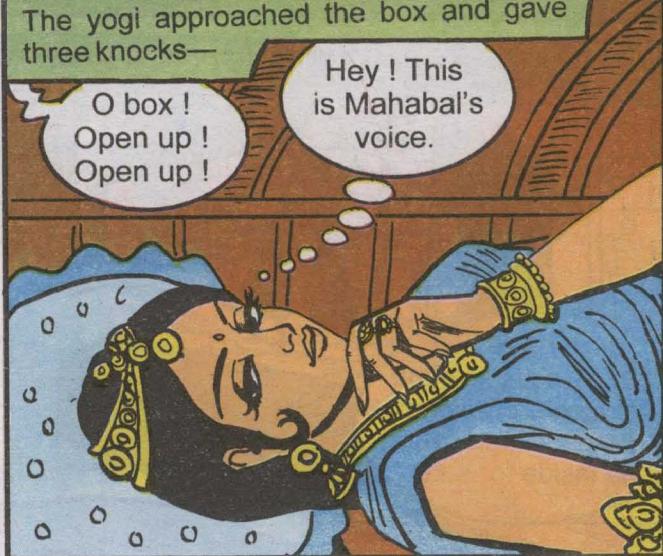
O monk ! When so many brave princes could not do that, do think, you could open this box ?



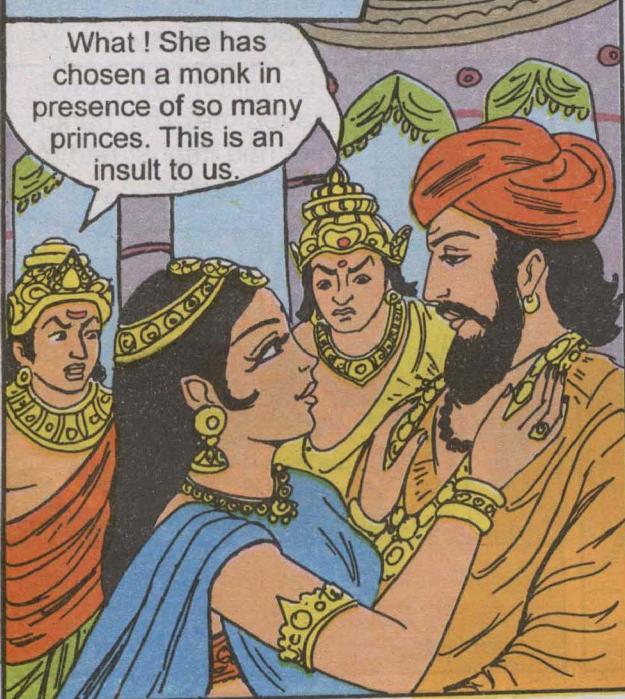
The yogi approached the box and gave three knocks—

O box ! Open up ! Open up !

Hey ! This is Mahabal's voice.



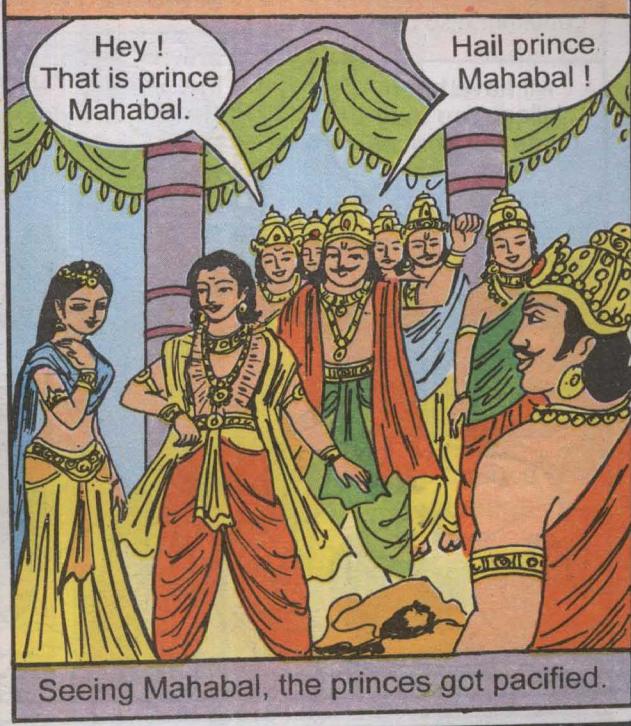
The princess released the bolt and came out. She had the Lakshmi-punj necklace in her hands. She placed it on Mahabal's neck.



With great fanfare princess Malaya was married to Mahabal.



All the princes drew their swords. Just then Mahabal removed his disguise to become his normal self.



Seeing Mahabal, the princes got pacified.

When Mahabal was returning to his city after his marriage with Malaya, bandit chief Lohakhur, who had kidnapped Malaya, attacked.



There was a terrible battle. One by one prince Mahabal killed the whole gang of bandits with his own sword. Lohakhur also died.

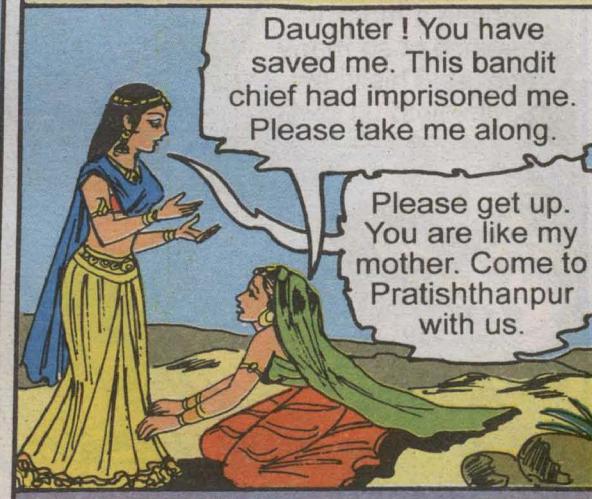


On reaching Pratishthanpur, the prince displayed all the wealth of Lohakhur before his father—



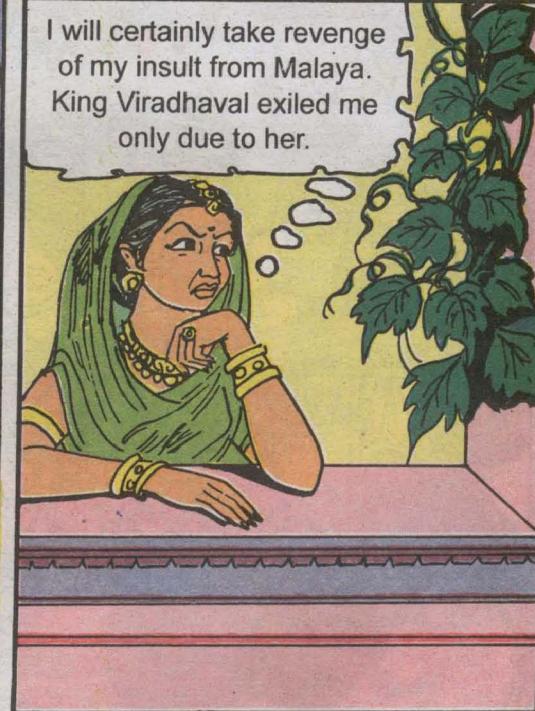
Then king Viradhaval called the citizens and allowed them to take their stolen goods back.

Queen Kanakamala was also with the bandit gang. When she saw Mahabal victorious, she ran and fell at Malaya's feet. She then started acting—

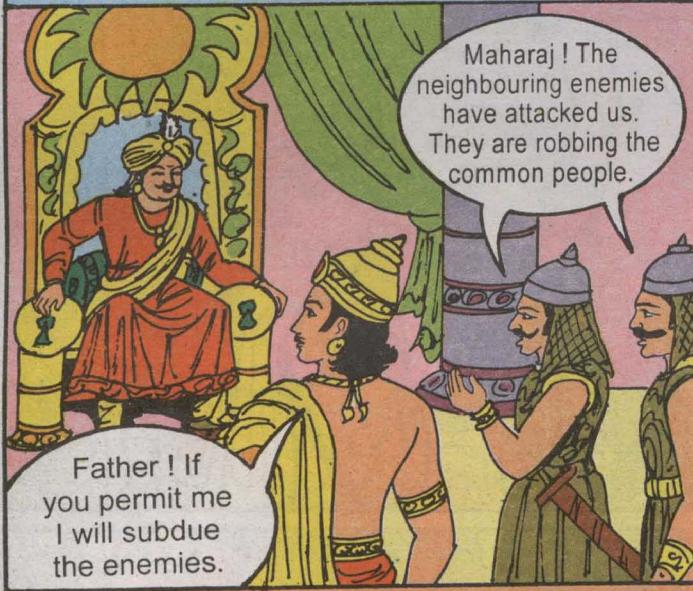


Mahabal left for the city with Kanakamala and all the wealth the bandit had collected.

Kanakamala was allowed to live in the palace with Malayasundari. She always thought only of taking revenge from Malaya.

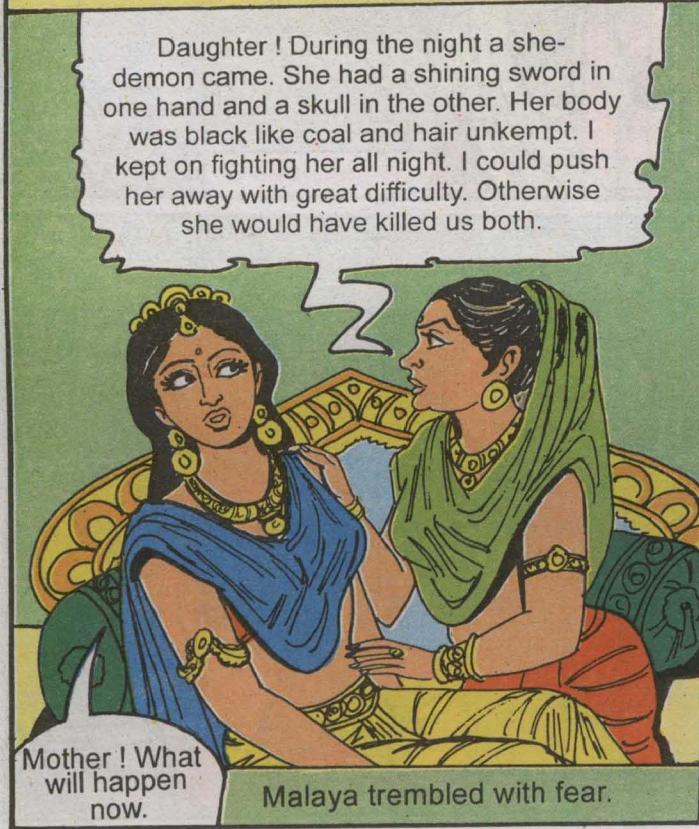


One day some spies from the border areas came to the king—



The king was confident of the bravery of his son. He gave permission.

Slowly Kanakamala gained Malaya's confidence. One day she said—



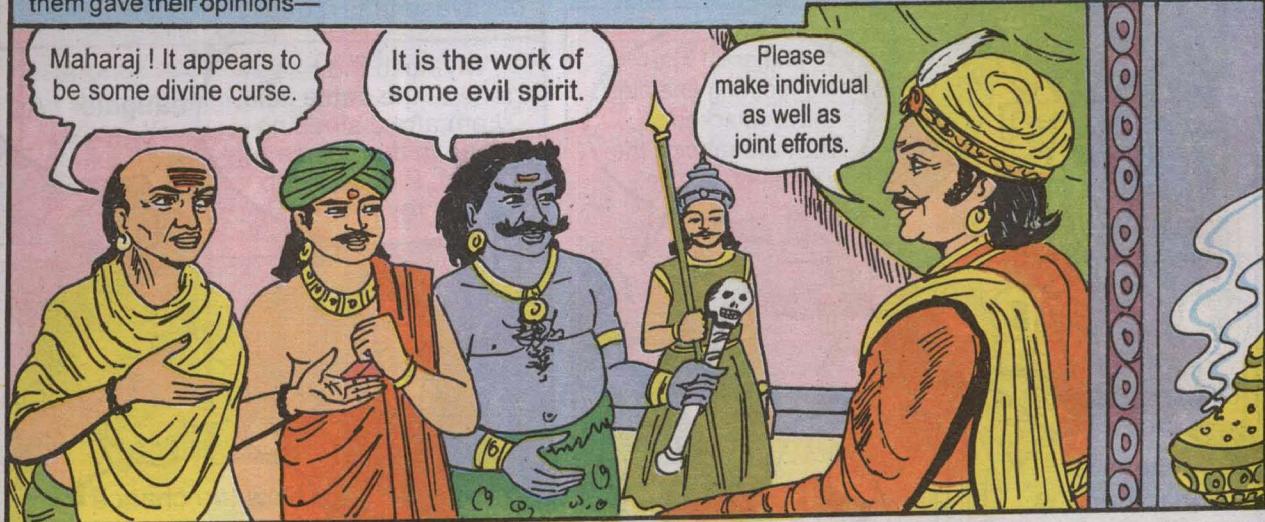
Mahabal left for the battle. One day Malayasundari requested Kanakamala—



Daughter ! Don't be afraid. I will change my appearance to match her and then fight. You just get me some feathers, a sword, black colour and black dress. But beware no one should know about this.



A few days later suddenly there was an epidemic in Pratishthanpur. The king called doctors and witch doctors. They did all they could including mantra chanting but the epidemic could not be controlled. All of them gave their opinions—



In the evening when king returned to the palace, Kanakamala saw him brooding alone. She came to the king and said—

Maharaj ! I feel ashamed to tell but your daughter-in-law Malaya is not human, she is a witch, a sorceress. During the night she turns into a demon and sucks the blood of citizens. This is the epidemic.

No ! No !
Malaya can't be that. You will have to prove this.



Maharaj ! During the second quarter of the night you could see all that with your own eyes.

During the night Kanakamala, disguised as a witch, jumped and danced in the courtyard with a sword and a skull in her hands. When the king saw this he ordered his guards—



The guards chased the figure. Kanakamala rushed into Malaya's room and bolted the doors from inside. She said to Malaya—

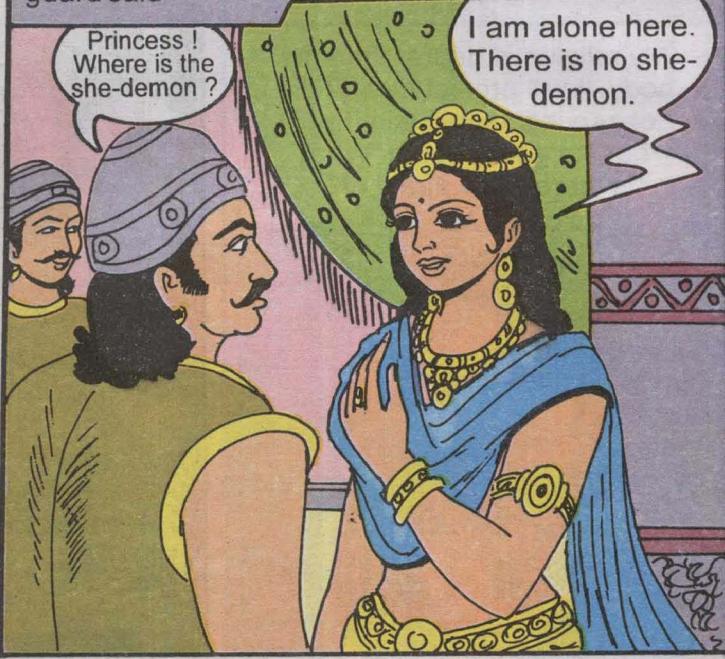
Daughter ! King's guards are coming to catch me. Please save me.



Hastily Malaya concealed her in a box. The guards knocked at the door. Malaya opened the door. The guard said—

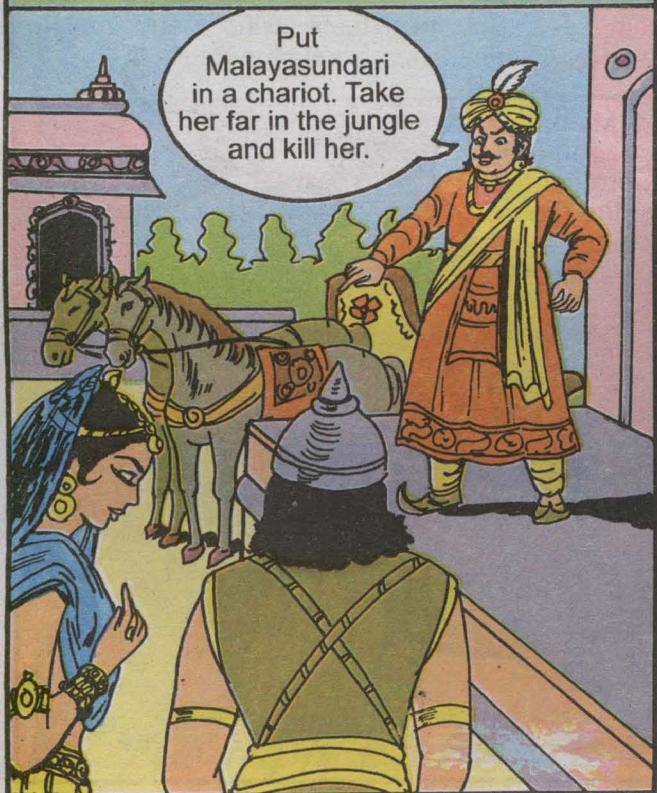
Princess ! Where is the she-demon ?

I am alone here. There is no she-demon.



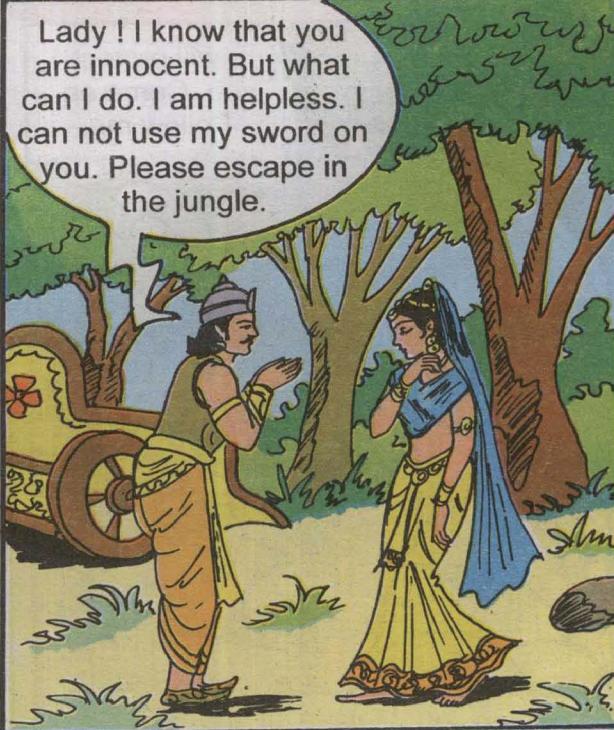
Now the king had no doubt that Malaya was a witch. In the morning he called the police chief and instructed—

Put Malayasundari in a chariot. Take her far in the jungle and kill her.



The police chief was a nice man. But he had to follow the king's order. He took Malaya far in the jungle and said—

Lady ! I know that you are innocent. But what can I do. I am helpless. I can not use my sword on you. Please escape in the jungle.



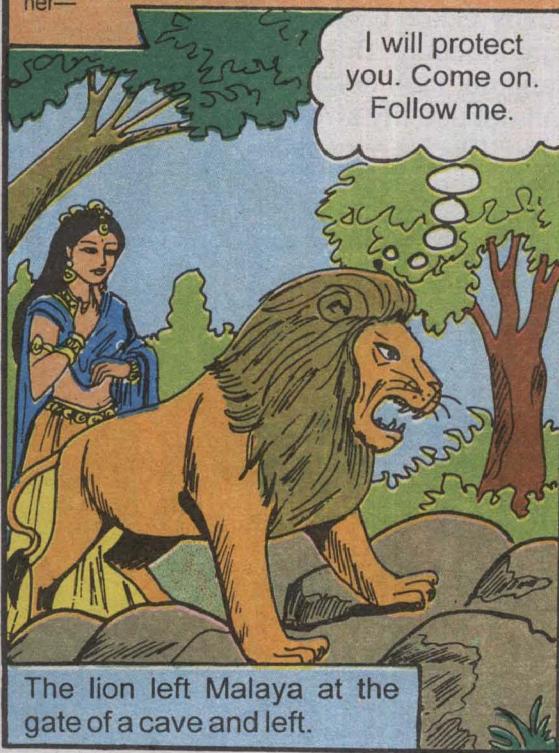
Leaving Malaya in the forest, he returned.

Malaya was walking alone in the desolate dangerous forest. She trembled when she suddenly heard the roar of a lion. She thought—

My religion is dearer than my body. It will protect me. If I die observing my religion, I will have a good rebirth. What is there to be afraid of?



Malaya's feelings influenced the lion. He turned around and started walking ahead of Malaya as if he was telling her—



The lion left Malaya at the gate of a cave and left.

Just then the roaring lion came near. Malaya joined her palms and stood before the lion saying—



Malaya spent the night in the cave. In the morning she took her bath in the nearby lake and ate fruits from trees. She lived there without any trouble. After some months she gave birth to a son.



One day Malaya was standing near the lake. The king of a neighbouring state came in the jungle for hunting. He saw Malaya and was drawn towards her.

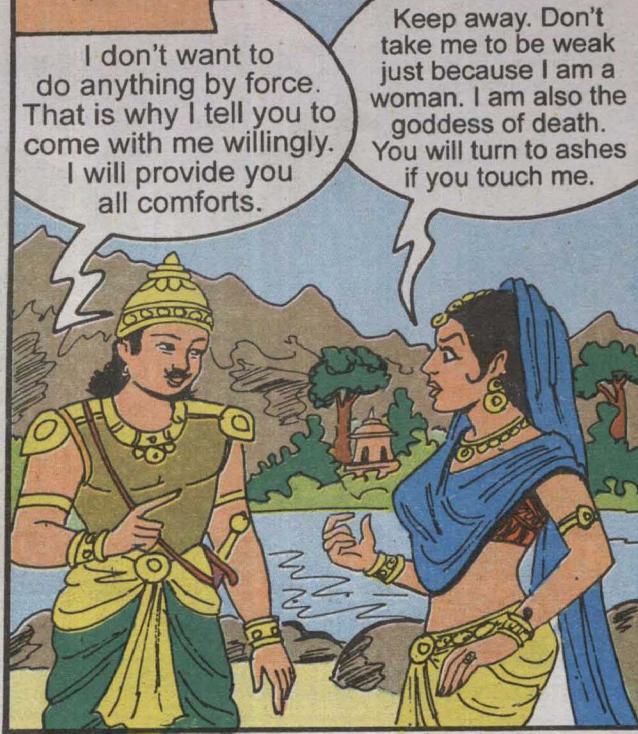
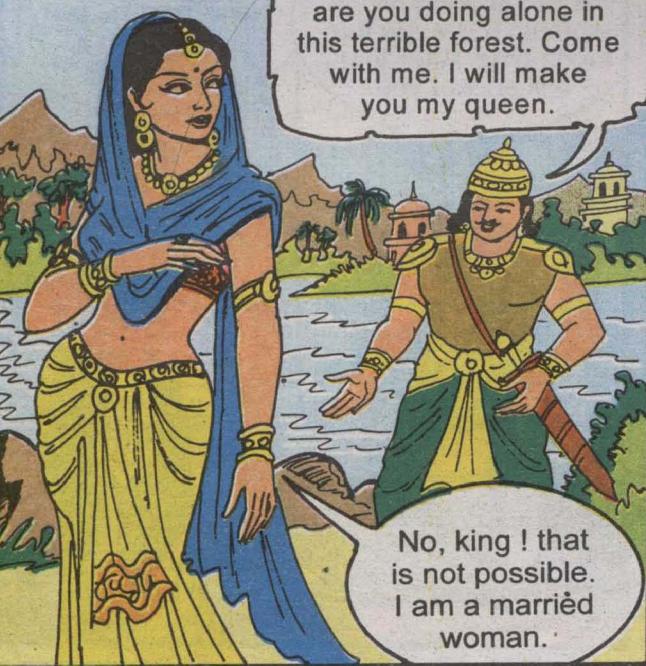
Beautiful lady ! What are you doing alone in this terrible forest. Come with me. I will make you my queen.

No, king ! that is not possible. I am a married woman.

But the king was filled with lust. He stepped ahead and tried to hold Malaya. Malaya stepped back.

I don't want to do anything by force. That is why I tell you to come with me willingly. I will provide you all comforts.

Keep away. Don't take me to be weak just because I am a woman. I am also the goddess of death. You will turn to ashes if you touch me.



Malaya was thinking some way out. Suddenly the infant lying in its cradle cried and the king heard that.

Oh ! This child must be her only. How lucky I am. I am childless. Now I got a child as well as this beauty.



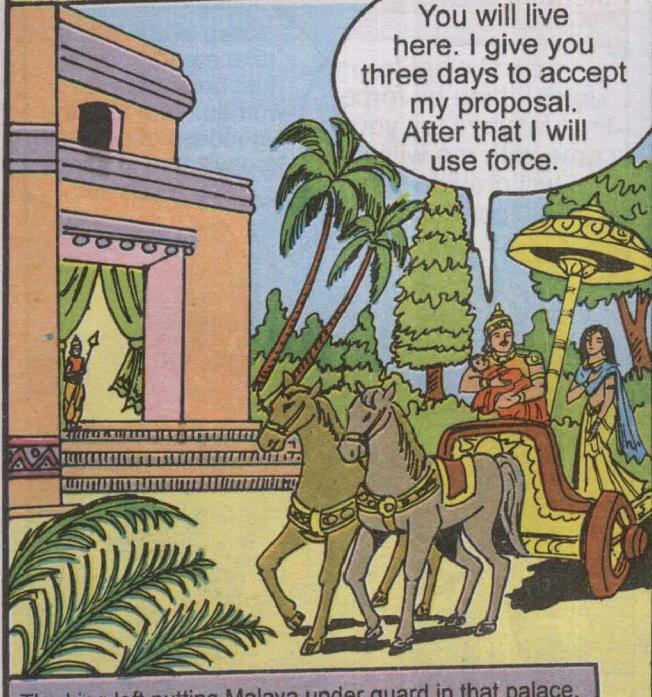
He picked the child up—

I am taking him away. Now if you want you may also come with me...



As a cow follows its calf, drawn by her love for her child, Malaya followed the king.

The king helped Malaya into his chariot and brought her to his garden-palace outside the city. He said—



The king left putting Malaya under guard in that palace.

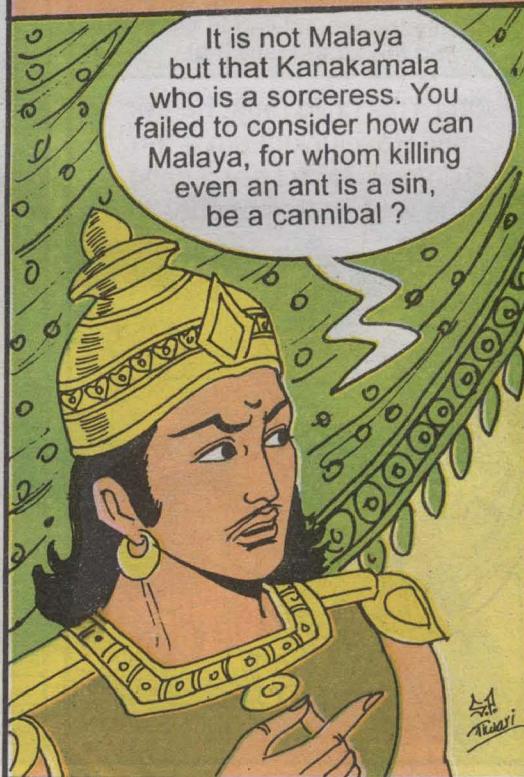
There, when Mahabal returned victorious from war he came to know that Malaya was sentenced to death when she was pregnant. He asked king Soorpal—



The king came three days later. Malaya cleverly found a way out—



On hearing this, Mahabal uttered angrily—

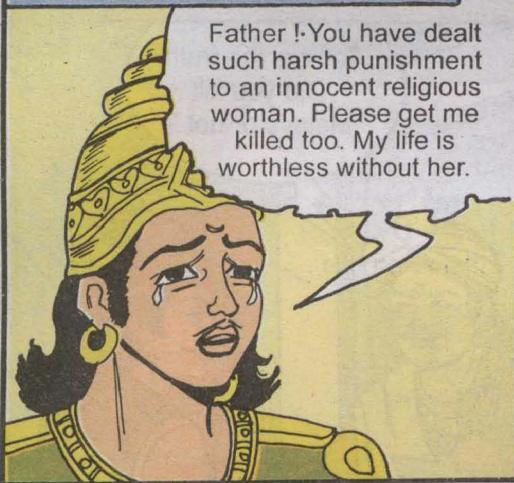


Mahabal was in tears—

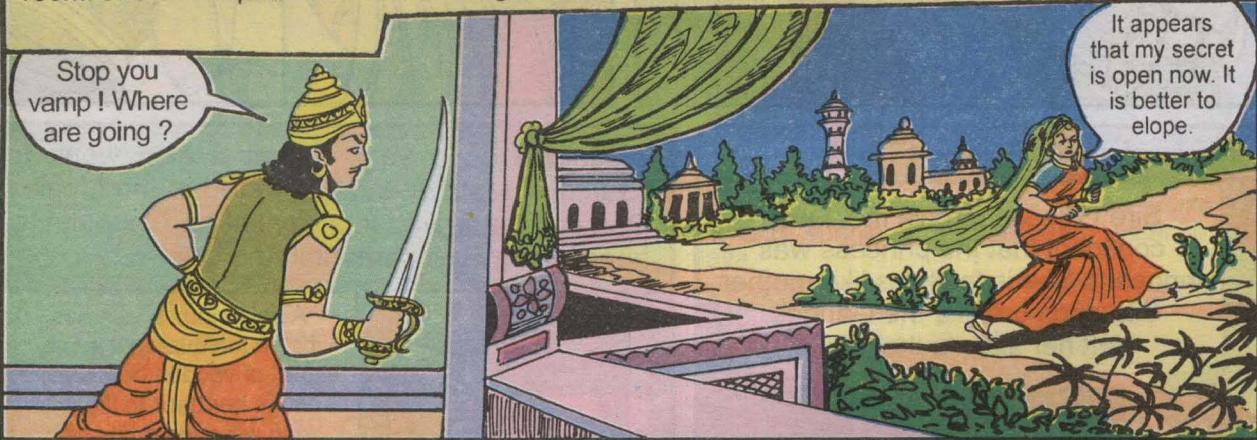
Father ! You have dealt such harsh punishment to an innocent religious woman. Please get me killed too. My life is worthless without her.

Then burning with anger he shouted—

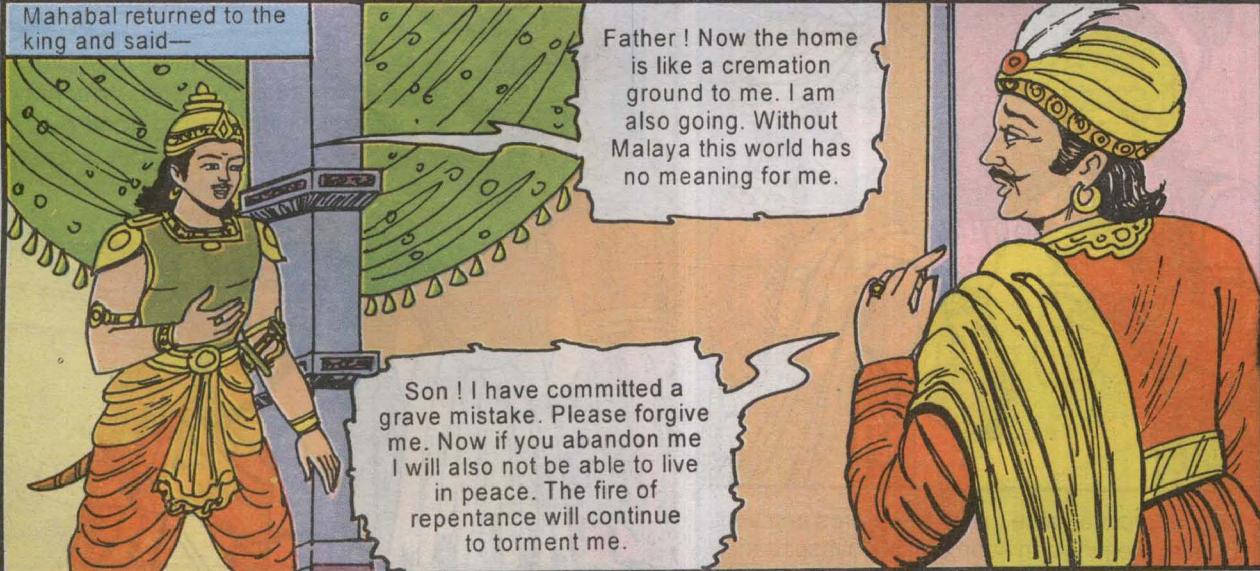
Where is that wench Kanakamala ?



With a sword in hand Mahabal rushed into the palace. Kanakamala saw him coming from her upstairs room. She left the palace from the back gate and ran away towards the jungle.



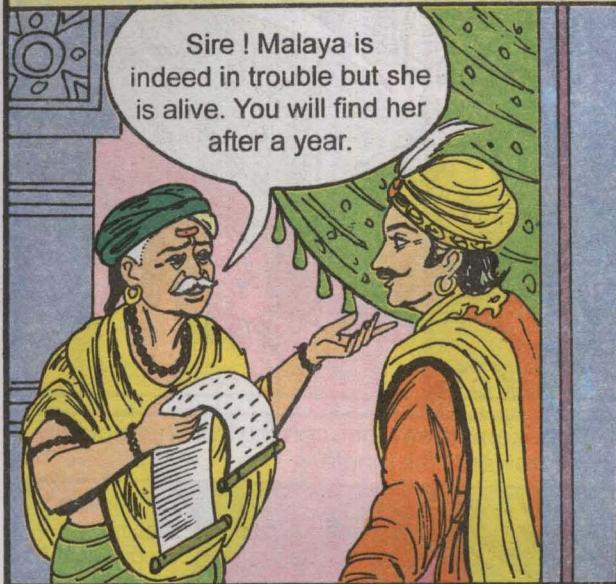
Mahabal returned to the king and said—



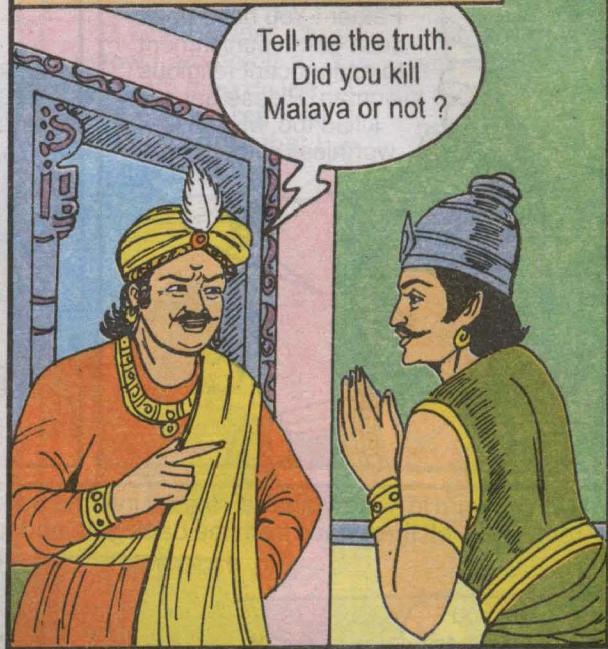
Father ! Now the home is like a cremation ground to me. I am also going. Without Malaya this world has no meaning for me.

Son ! I have committed a grave mistake. Please forgive me. Now if you abandon me I will also not be able to live in peace. The fire of repentance will continue to torment me.

Around that time an astrologer came to the court. The king told him everything and asked his advise. The astrologer consulted his chart and said—

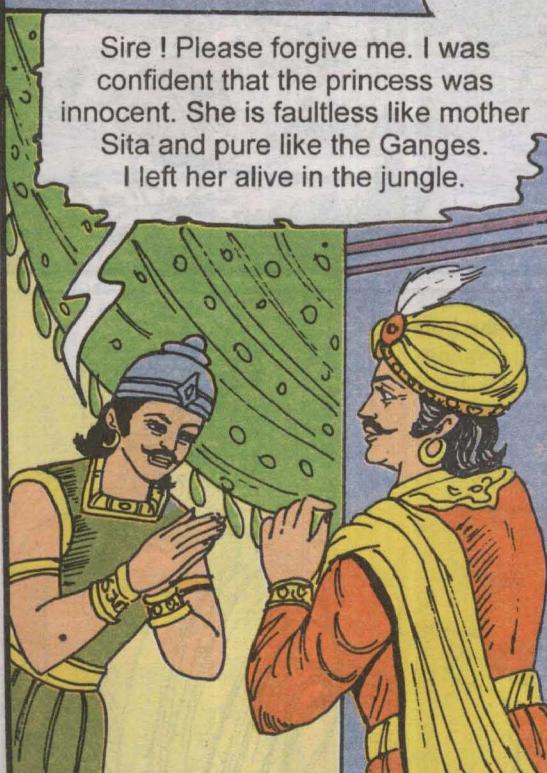


The king called his police chief—

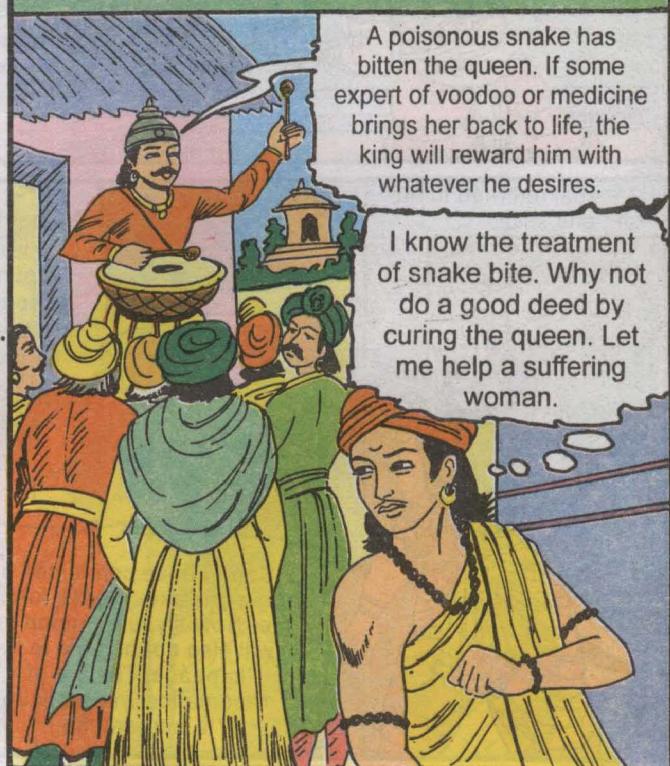


The chief replied trembling—

Sire ! Please forgive me. I was confident that the princess was innocent. She is faultless like mother Sita and pure like the Ganges. I left her alive in the jungle.



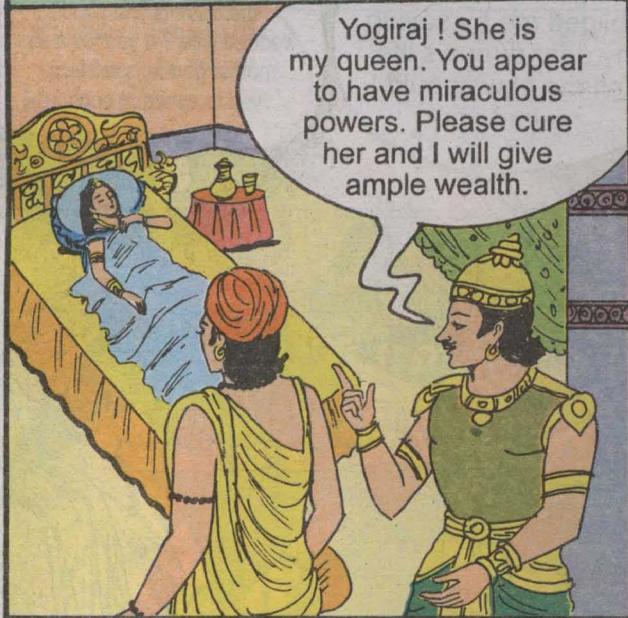
Disguised as a yogi, Mahabal also went in search of Malaya and wandered in the jungle. One day he arrived in a city called Tilakpur. He heard an announcement in the city—



King Soorpal at once called his guards and sent them to the jungle in search of Malayasundari.

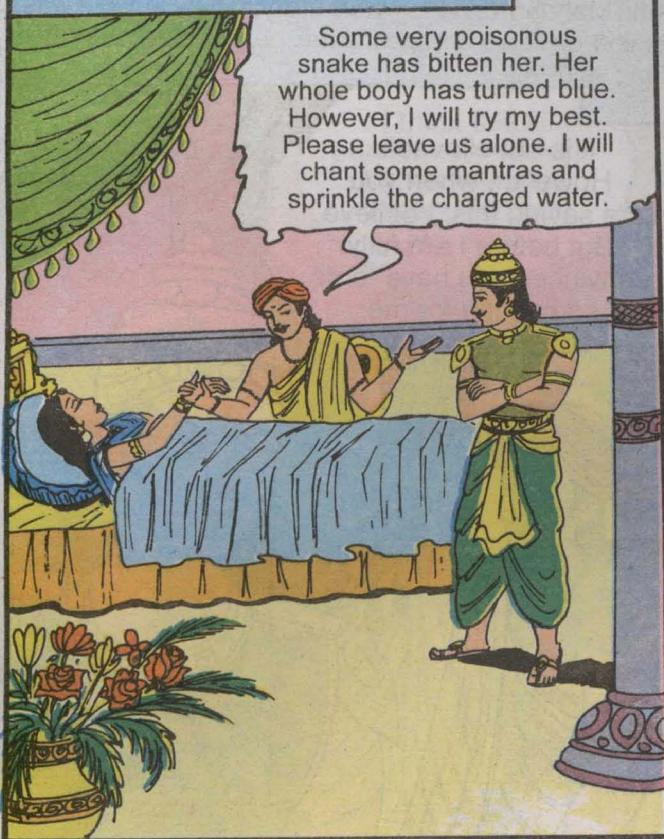
He went to the king's court and the king took him to the garden palace. He pointed towards an unconscious woman and said—

Yogiraj ! She is my queen. You appear to have miraculous powers. Please cure her and I will give ample wealth.



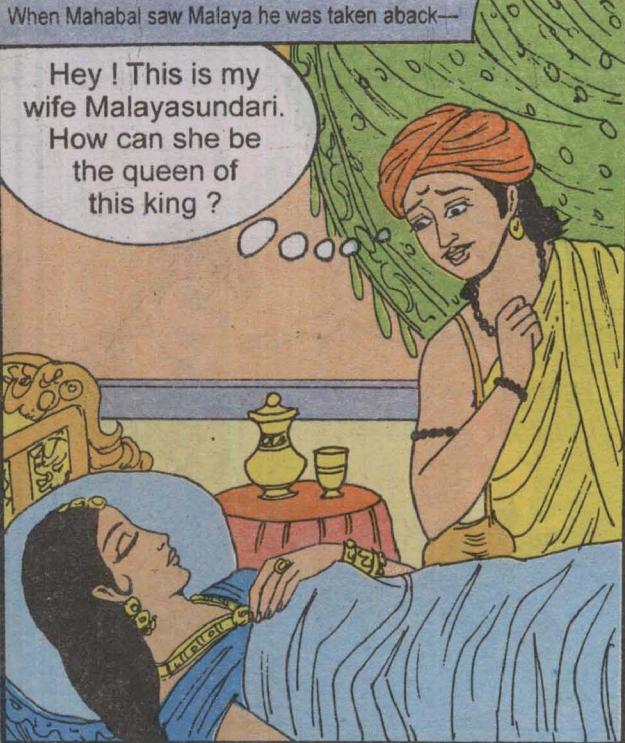
Mahabal examined Malaya's pulse and said—

Some very poisonous snake has bitten her. Her whole body has turned blue. However, I will try my best. Please leave us alone. I will chant some mantras and sprinkle the charged water.



When Mahabal saw Malaya he was taken aback—

Hey ! This is my wife Malayasundari. How can she be the queen of this king ?

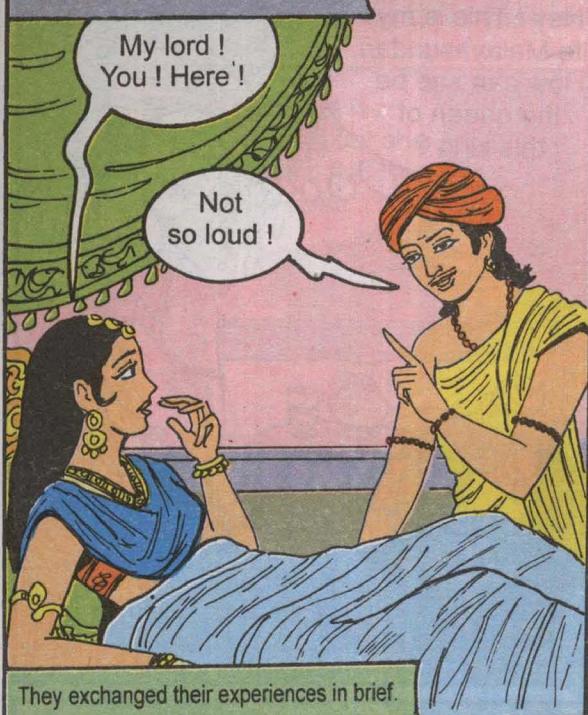


When alone, Mahabal chanted the name of Arihant Bhagavan. He then took out the snake-bead and sprinkled the charged water on Malaya.

Om Namo Arihantanam...



In a few moments Malaya opened her eyes. Seeing Mahabal she uttered with surprise—



They exchanged their experiences in brief.

The king was filled with fear. He said—

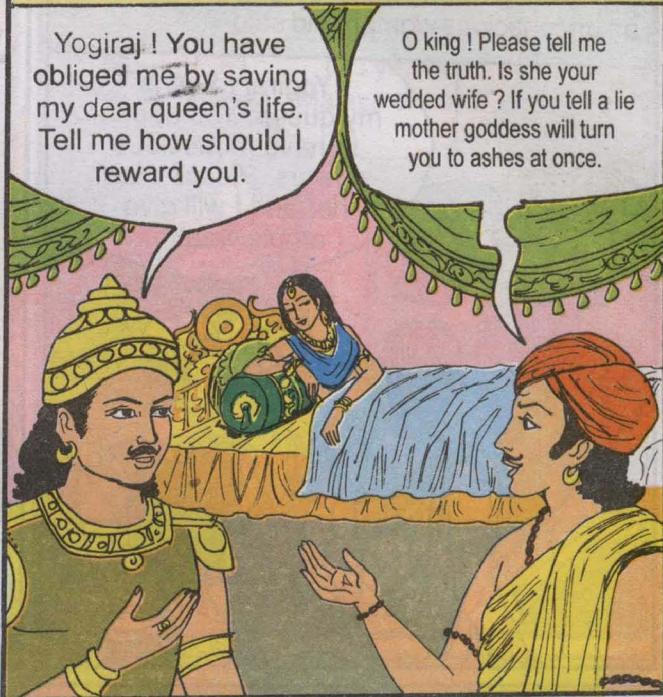
Yogiraj ! I found her alone in the jungle. I gave her refuge and now I want to make her happy.



When the king heard voices from inside the room he entered. Finding Malaya sitting he uttered with joy—

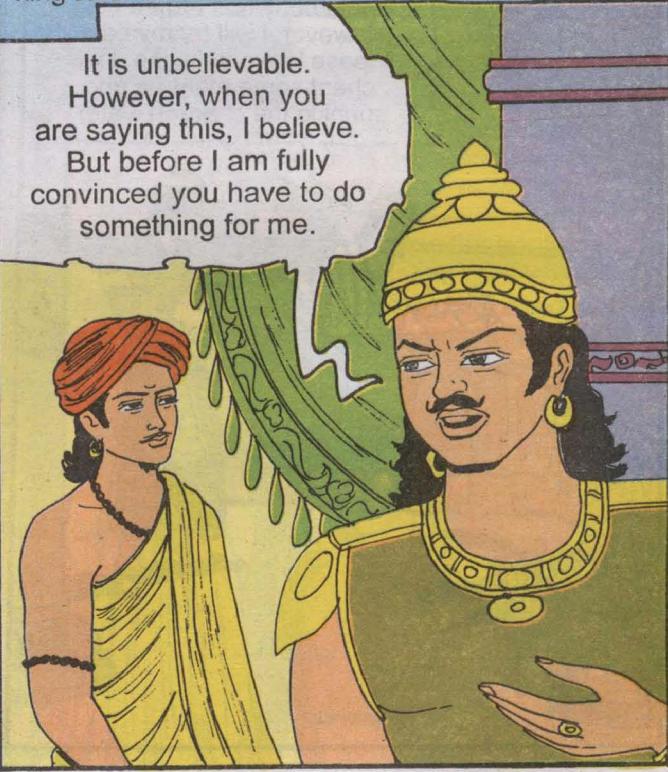
Yogiraj ! You have obliged me by saving my dear queen's life. Tell me how should I reward you.

O king ! Please tell me the truth. Is she your wedded wife ? If you tell a lie mother goddess will turn you to ashes at once.



And Mahabal told the whole story of how Malaya was exiled on false charges. After hearing the story the king said—

It is unbelievable. However, when you are saying this, I believe. But before I am fully convinced you have to do something for me.



With his special powers Mahabal accomplished all the tasks given by the king. But the king went on giving him new tasks. At last Mahabal said—

O king ! Enough is enough. Now allow us to go. We want to return to our city.

Wait a minute, prince ! Only one last task. Please do that. Please show my back with my own eyes.



Mahabal called for two large mirrors. He set them near the king's back and said—

See, here is you back.

No. Not through mirrors. I want to see my back with my own eyes.



When the king insisted, Mahabal twisted the king's neck with his special powers. Now the king cried in pain—

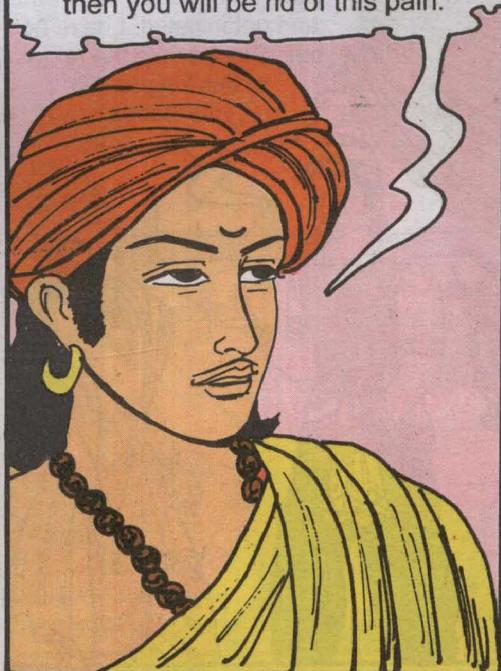
Save me please ! Please forgive me.

I think this is punishment enough for his mistake. Please forgive him now.

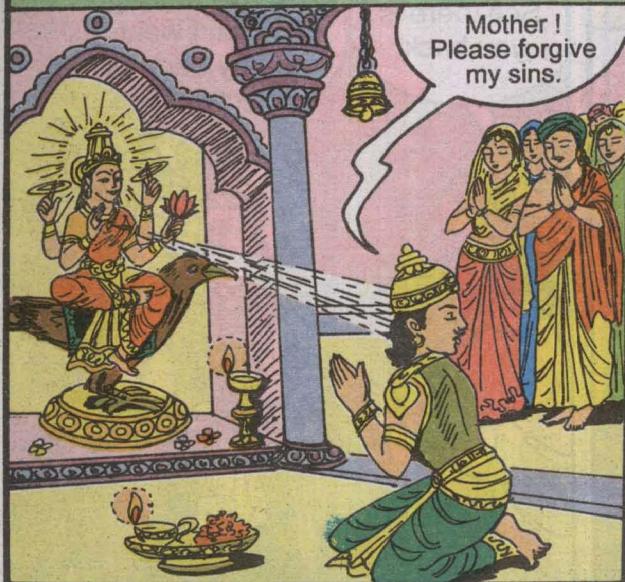


Mahabal said—

O King ! In the garden outside the city there is a temple of mother Chakreshvari. Go bare feet and seek forgiveness for your crimes. Only then you will be rid of this pain.



Passing through the city, the king and his family walked to the temple bare feet. After doing ritual worship and prayer he fell on his knees and sought forgiveness—



With the blessing of goddess Chakreshvari the king regained his normal posture.

In presence of all he begged forgiveness from Mahabal and Malaya. Just then guards came and informed—



They all listened to the discourse. The king got enlightened. On his return to the palace he said to Mahabal—

Prince Mahabal! Now I want to renounce the world and get initiated. I have no heir. Please take the reigns of this kingdom in your hands.



Mahabal was crowned. Malayasundari became the chief queen.



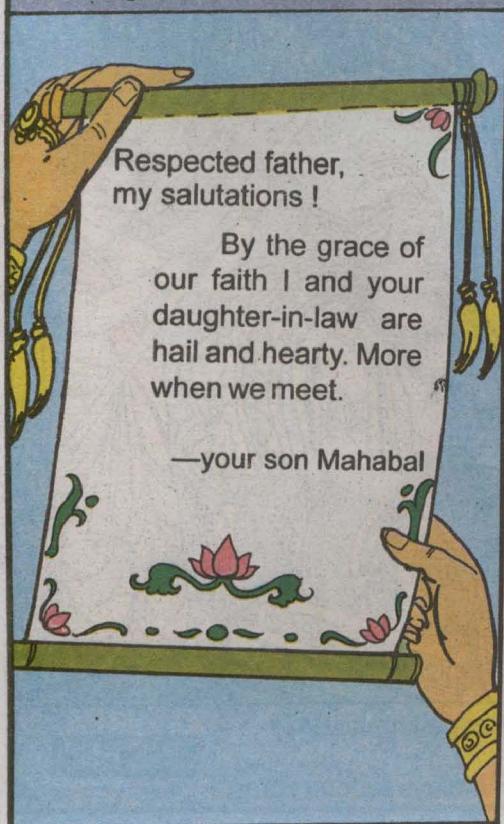
Neighbouring rulers king Viradhal and Soorpal came to know that the king of Tilakpur has given his kingdom to a yogi and got initiated. They made a plan—



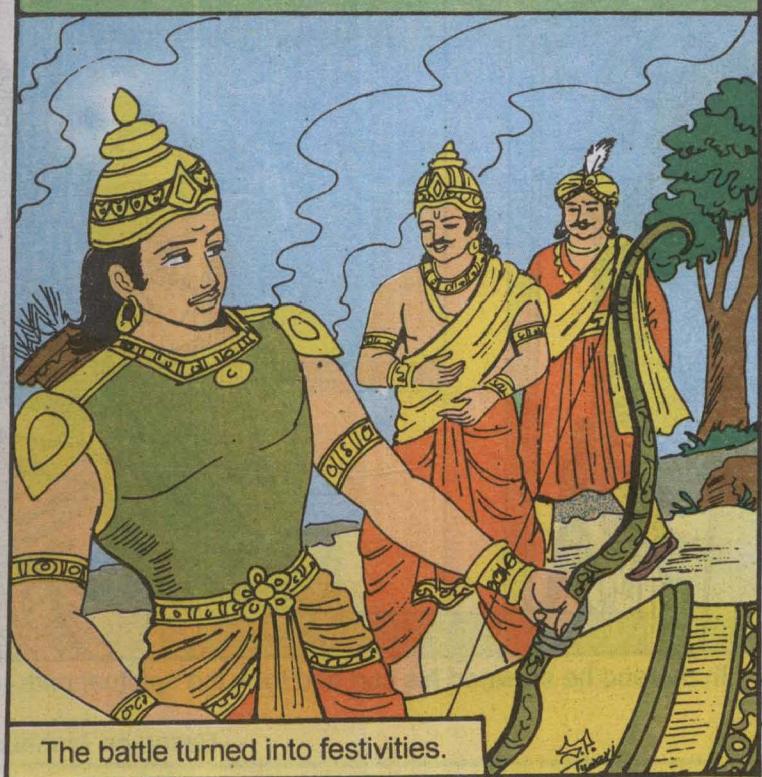
The two laid siege to Tilakpur. Mahabal showed great valour in the battle. The attacking armies retreated. Finding a chance, Mahabal attached a note on an arrow and aimed it towards king Soorpal. The arrow fell near Soorpal's feet.



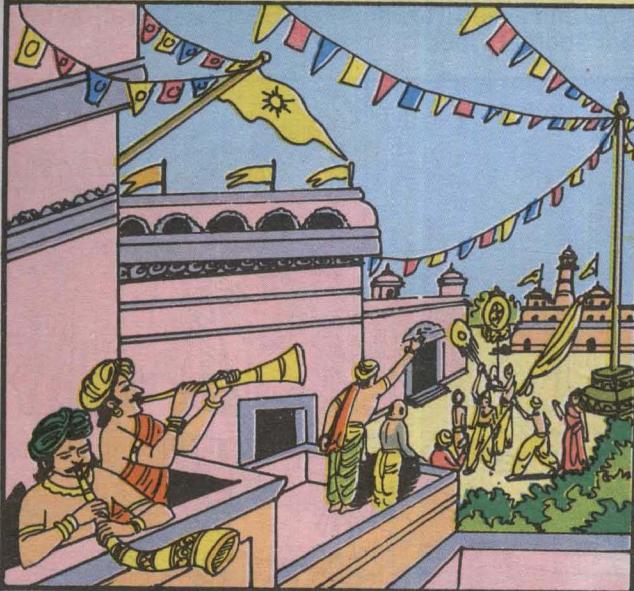
The king took the letter and read—



King Soorpal jumped with joy. He gave the good news to Viradhal. Both the kings rushed to Mahabal.



Mahabal returned to his capital along with his father and father-in-law. Week long festivities were organized.

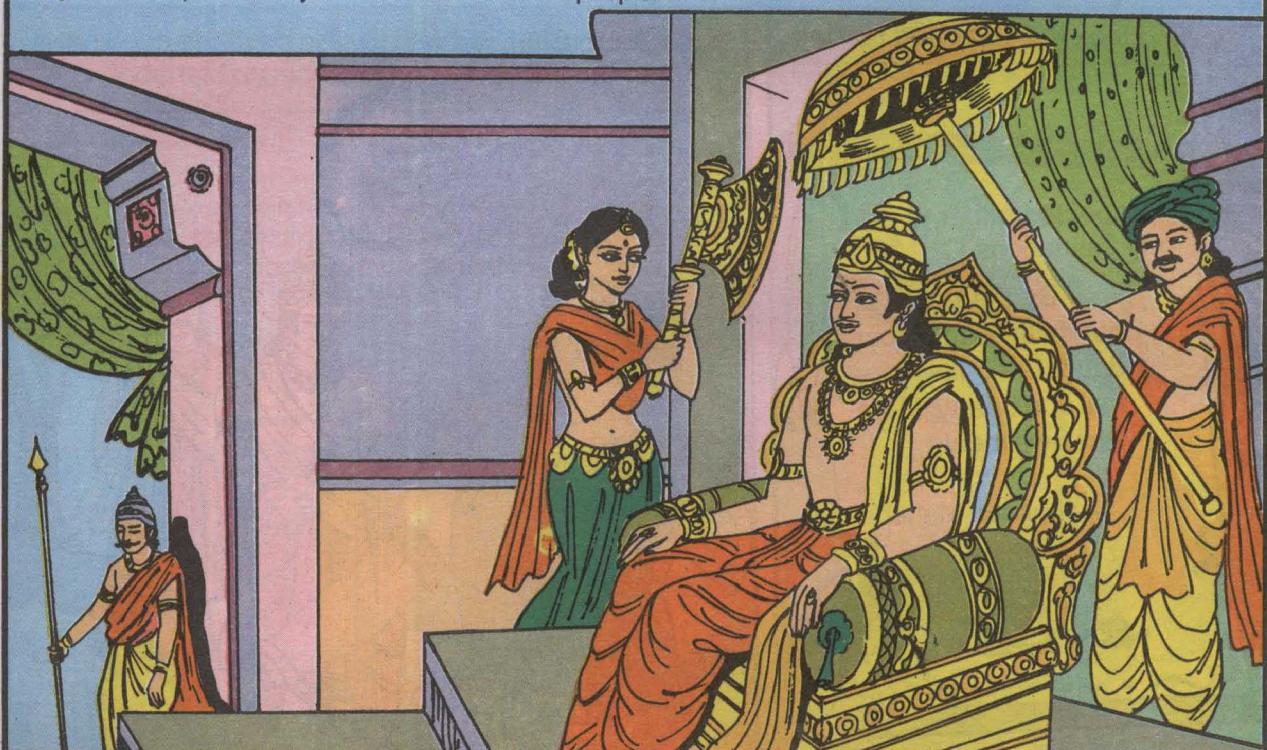


Just then the garden keeper came and informed—

Maharaj ! Acharya Chandrasen Suri, the disciple of Bhagavan Parshva Naath has arrived in the garden.



On listening to the discourse of the Acharya, king Soorpal and Viradhalb got detached. Both the kings gave their kingdoms to Mahabal and took the spiritual path after getting initiated. Mahabal took charge of all the three kingdoms and provided a just and lawful rule to the people.

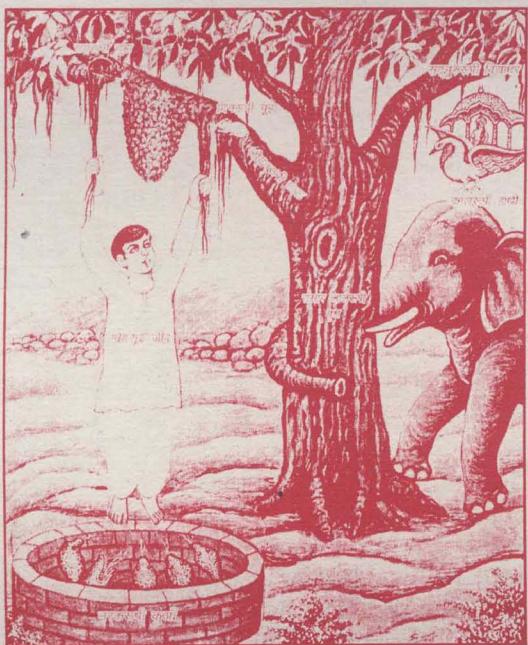


In the end he crowned his son and took the spiritual path after getting initiated.

THE END

—Based on Mahabal Malayasundari Raas.

CARNAL PLEASURES ARE LIKE DROPS OF HONEY



Carnal pleasures give happiness when experienced. But a being obsessed with fondness for them experiences sorrow, grief and pain in the end.

In order to explain the transitory nature of carnal pleasures as well as the long string of miseries attached to the momentary joys, sages have narrated the story of drops of honey.

A young man spent many years doing business in some faraway country. After earning a lot of wealth he was returning home. On his long journey home he entered a dense and large forest. On a narrow trail he came across a huge black elephant. Afraid of the elephant, the young man ran back into the jungle. The elephant gave him a chase. To save his life the young man climbed a tree. The elephant soon reached there. The young man was sitting on a high branch. The angry elephant violently shook the trunk to uproot the tree. This weakened the

man's hold on the branch and he started slipping. Luckily he found two slim dangling branches and caught hold of them. Right overhead was a honeycomb. Honey was dripping from it. A few drops of honey fell into the man's open mouth and he enjoyed it. On the tree there were two rats, one black and one white. These two rats started nibbling the two branches held by the man. Just below the suspended man was a old dry well. In the well were poisonous snakes. Looking at the suspended man the snakes were also hissing and waiting for him to fall.

Just then a Vidyadhar (a divine being) passed from there. When he saw the man trapped from all sides by certain death he felt pity for him. He stopped his celestial vehicle and called the youth — "Son! See there is death all around you. I will bring my vehicle near you. Jump into it and I will shift you to a safe place."

The youth said — "O benevolent person! Please wait a minute. Let me taste just one more drop of honey. It is very sweet and tasty." The divine person persuaded — "Win over the greed for honey. See the death surrounding you and jump in my vehicle."

"One more minute. Just one more drop of honey." Thinking thus the youth could not abandon his greed for honey. The Vidyadhar left disappointed.

Message : This worldly human existence is like that tree. Death is like the elephant. Day and night are like white and black rats continuously nibbling at life-span that is like the branches. Lowly birth in hell is like the well. Carnal pleasures are like the honey drops. A noble teacher is like the Vidyadhar who offers salvation in the form of religion like the celestial vehicle. But humans are not abandoning the obsession of carnal pleasures like that youth. Even the warning of a noble teacher fails to save them.

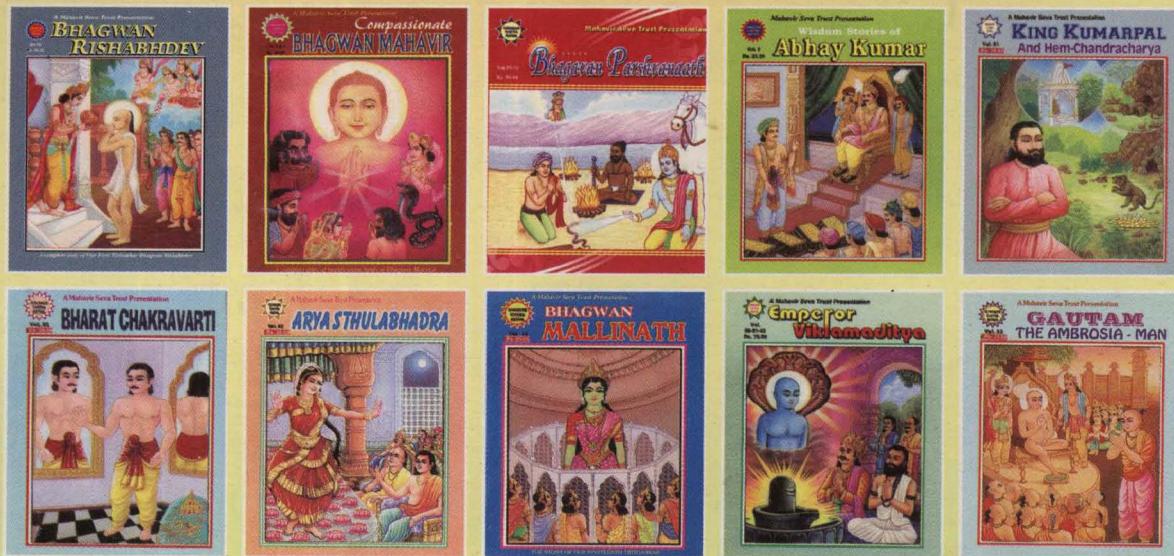
(courtesy : Sushil Sadbodh Shatak)

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